

1. The main Teaching Accommodation surrounding the Central Courtyard

Comprehensive School

The Story of Woodberry
Down



by

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Headmistress of Woodberry Down

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Contents

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| | <i>Foreword</i> | vii |
| 1 | <i>The Development of the Comprehensive Idea</i> | 1 |
| 2 | <i>The School to serve the Neighbourhood</i> | 12 |
| 3 | <i>Appointing Staff and Ordering Equipment</i> | 25 |
| 4 | <i>Woodberry Down opens—The First Term</i> | 32 |
| 5 | <i>Providing a Full and Many-Sided Education</i> | 44 |
| 6 | <i>Schemes of Work</i> | 60 |
| 7 | <i>The Mixed-Ability Experiment and Religious Education</i> | 76 |
| 8 | <i>The House System gives the Personal Touch</i> | 90 |
| 9 | <i>The Careers Convention</i> | 110 |
| 10 | <i>The Effect of the Comprehensive Principle on the Lives of Individual Children</i> | 125 |
| 11 | <i>Learning to Live Together, School Journeys, Educational Visits, Clubs</i> | 140 |
| 12 | <i>Growing into a Community</i> | 157 |
| | <i>Index</i> | 167 |

Illustrations

| | | |
|----|--|--------------|
| 1 | <i>The main Teaching Accommodation surrounding the Central Courtyard</i> | frontispiece |
| 2 | <i>A group of First Year Children. In the background the main Assembly Hall</i> | page 48 |
| 3 | <i>A corner of the Library</i> | 49 |
| 4 | <i>The Mechanics Laboratory Equipment, made in the Workshops</i> | 56 |
| 5 | <i>A demonstration to Fifth-formers in the Physics Laboratory</i> | 56 |
| 6 | <i>Boys in the Technical Course in an Engineering Workshop</i> | 57 |
| 7 | <i>A Woodwork Centre</i> | 57 |
| 8 | <i>Art. A Mixed-Ability Group at work</i> | 88 |
| 9 | <i>Twins of different ability levels working together in Pottery Mixed-Ability Group</i> | 88 |
| 10 | <i>Drama Mixed-Ability Group in the Assembly Hall</i> | 89 |
| 11 | <i>Making Cuitars</i> | 89 |
| 12 | <i>Learning to play the Guitar—Club Activity</i> | 89 |
| 13 | <i>Chess Club</i> | 144 |
| 14 | <i>Drama Club. Senior boys in mime-drama 'War and Peace'</i> | 145 |
| 15 | <i>Making a Tuck-shop—Club Activity</i> | 160 |
| 16 | <i>A group of Sixth-formers in the Playground</i> | 161 |

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Foreword

Many people are interested in the Comprehensive School and my staff and I are constantly asked for information by colleagues in the teaching profession both at home and abroad, by politicians, journalists and parents who wish to know more of this new conception of secondary education. In writing of Woodberry Down I have tried to provide the answers to the questions which are asked most frequently and to indicate how we are getting to grips with the educational and social problems which confront us.

As I am a headmistress in the London teaching service it will be obvious that much of the organization which I describe is based on the general pattern for Comprehensive School development as laid down by the Education Committee, but this book should not be interpreted as a detailed exposition of the Council's policy, for we head teachers of London enjoy a great deal of freedom in planning and running our schools. While I have received much help for which I have asked from the Council, its officers and inspectors, I have never received what I consider to be a directive much less a blueprint! The views and opinions I have expressed are personal ones.

Sometimes there has been no need to cloak the identity of the boys and girls about whom I have written. On other occasions some camouflage has been desirable, but I have adhered to the essential points of the stories.

My thanks are due to these and all my children and to their parents, to the members of the governing body who have encouraged me and to heads of departments, house masters and other teachers from whose syllabi and reports I have quoted. The pupils of this school are very fortunate in spending their secondary years in the company of the men and women who form the staff of Woodberry Down.

H. R. CHETWYND

April 1959

The Development of the Comprehensive Idea

MY ROOM, like the rest of the school, is light, airy, and colourful. It looks out on to a paved garden where a fountain plays. Beyond stretch acres of reservoir, haunt of wild birds, and far in the distance rises the graceful spire of Stoke Newington Church.

Parents of my children and I often stand at the windows looking out at the peaceful scene and talk of our own school days in London in the 1920's and 30's. We remember the tall grey buildings dating from School Board days with infants on the ground floor, big girls on the first floor, and big boys on the second floor. We recall the large classes, sometimes of fifty children, moving silently in twos along corridors and on staircases whose walls always seem to have been tiled in chocolate brown or painted in ox-blood red. Teachers, it is generally agreed, were very strict and sticklers for neatness, accurate copying and learning by heart. Headmasters and headmistresses, in retrospect, were always grim martinets; this one insisting that children moved about the building on tip-toes, that one waiting at the top of the stairs to cane late-comers to school without questioning, another standing rule-breakers with hands on heads, facing the wall, for what seemed hours on end. Drill, in full clothing, in the hall, chained iron drinking cups in the playground, draughty lavatories across the yard with doors that would

not lock and cisterns that seldom operated—these memories are evoked with no bitterness and often an amused, wry affection in the cut and thrust of vigorous conversation.

'After all that was *our education*. You had no choice. You couldn't take it or leave it. And everyone was in the same boat.'

'No—wait a minute. Was everyone in the same boat? Our schools were the elementary schools where we all left at fourteen. What about the public schools and the grammar schools? They were the places where people really got a start in life.'

'That may be true—but we knew perfectly well those places weren't for the likes of us. Eton and Harrow—they were for the upper classes *from a different world*, and most children going to the grammar schools had fees paid for them—shopkeepers' children, doctors' children, and so on. It was no use breaking your heart wanting to go there.'

At this stage someone is bound to remember eleven plus tests as they used to be.

'A few of the children from our schools did get there. Don't you remember the scholarship? When we were about eleven, teachers would sort some of us out to take preliminary examinations. Then from these chosen boys and girls took the final papers in English and arithmetic, and anyone good enough won a junior county scholarship to go to a grammar school and another small group, not so good, went to central schools.'

'Do you remember feeling bitterness or resentment against these fortunate boys and girls?' I have often asked.

'Well no. After all it was such a small number in our time—the 20's—one or two a year. They were usually the very brainy ones as we all knew, and the lives they were going to lead—uniform, homework, extra years at school—so different from what we were used to, that often we felt pity rather than envy. The important thing was that nearly all of us stayed put in our own schools. We were the normal boys and girls completing the ordinary schooling so that we could get out to work and earn money as quickly as possible. It was the extraordinary ones who moved away—that is if their parents could afford to let them go. Of course

it's all different now, although sometimes a bit mystifying.'

There is no doubt that the years of change since the 1944 Education Act have been bewildering and anxious ones for many parents. The primary school is accepted quite happily—this is where all little children spend together the first years of their school lives. What happens at the end of this time, however, is still, after fourteen years, not clear to many mothers and fathers. Secondary education for all was promised in the Act and a common tendency at first was to expect all education to be on the lines of the secondary schools of pre-1944 days, that is, the grammar schools. In recent years there has, however, been a complete and very significant change in interpretation. The term 'secondary', instead of applying to all schools for children over eleven years of age, is more often than not now used to describe post-primary schools other than grammar schools. A recent publication of a large progressive London borough, intended to explain municipal expenditure to the rate-payers, refers to two children, one who goes to a secondary school, and the other who has passed for a grammar school.

Whatever confusion was inevitable in the new use of the word 'secondary', one fact soon became very clear to parents. With the abolition of fees places were becoming available in most grammar schools for roughly a quarter of the children qualifying at the primary school through a selective test, while the remainder were transferred to the modern schools. As the modern schools were housed in the elementary school buildings, initially with the same head teachers, staff, facilities, equipment and curriculum, parents very naturally assumed that children attending these schools would have elementary education as they had always known it, the difference being that pupils stayed at school a year longer. Thinking parents who had tried to understand the Act believed quite honestly that they had been misled, and often this resentment transferred itself to the schools, where the staff were only too conscious that they could not provide what had traditionally been accepted as secondary education because an Act of Parliament promised it, nor could they be optimistic about developing the

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

new conception of non-academic practical secondary education which depended not only on their own enthusiasm and qualifications, but on the immediate provision of facilities and equipment. Consequently, parents asking direct questions and receiving either frank or evasive answers were strengthened in their determination to see their children profited from the increased educational opportunities and got into grammar school at all costs. The day of national family neurosis, the 11- $\frac{1}{2}$ test, came into being.

That there has been a great change of attitude to education since pre-war days is agreed by all parents. I can recall vividly many conversations I had with parents when I was teaching in a secondary modern school in South London in 1946, '47 and '48. Fathers, recently demobbed, always expressed themselves strongly.

'Living conditions are far better; they bear no comparison with the days of unemployment and insecurity before the war. You can afford to care about schooling when you know there's enough food, clothes, and fire, and the rent's been paid.'

'The war shook us up and showed us the chances a good education gave. Not only commissions with more pay and position, but all the interesting jobs—technical ones where you had to have maths. and sciences, flying, interpreting. In the Forces and in the factories the educated man or woman who could speak well, put a point of view and had some confidence, got to the top all the time.'

Mothers too, had played their part in the war effort and would explain how these experiences 'opened their eyes' to the value of a good education.

'In Civil Defence you worked alongside people you had hardly ever spoken to before, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, artists. Sometimes when it was quiet during nights, there would be arguments about politics and music, religion, science and wars. You would realize how lucky people were if they had been well educated, and make up your mind, if you came through, and conditions were better, to see that your children had a good start in life by getting a decent education. You realized what a good thing it was for all types of people in all sorts of jobs to get to know each other and to

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE IDEA

work together and understand each other, and felt sorry that this sort of thing only happened when there was a war on.'

At first the plan of the Coalition Government was welcomed with optimism.

'After the war when this Education Act was passed it sounded just the thing—as though all the Members of Parliament, Conservative, Labour, Liberal—agreed it hadn't been fair that for everyone except the very clever you had to have money to buy a good education. When fees were ended we knew many of our children would be able to get into the grammar schools and we were very pleased.'

Disillusionment set in fast. I was told the same story again and again.

'It just didn't work out. In point of fact this system caused very bad feeling. In a street perhaps there are a dozen children approaching eleven plus who have been friends in school since they were five years old. Probably all the mothers and fathers are hoping their own child will get to grammar school. Primary school head teachers are asked to provide a great deal of English, arithmetic and even intelligence, for many people believe this is a subject which can be taught. Parents compare marks, help with homework, some perhaps even arrange for extra coaching. They get very anxious and worked-up about it all and upset their children into the bargain. Then after the exam three or four lucky boys and girls go to the schools everyone wants, and the rest who have failed go to the other schools.'

It was not only in 1947 and 1948 but in every spring since, parents of children who have not been selected for grammar school explain their sense of frustration in a manner which has become only too familiar to head teachers.

'If you are ambitious for your child and she is one of the failures you get really desperate; you feel that she has ruined her life at eleven. It's not only the education. It's all the other things you think she will miss too. What happens now affects the way she speaks, the people she will mix with, the sort of job she will get, even later on the sort of man she will marry. So you decide to

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

economize and save enough money to find a school where you can pay fees and where you think she will get the advantages she will miss in the secondary modern school, but you find there isn't one except some little tin-pot private schools in old houses. Then you begin to feel it's all just as unfair as it ever was, only now instead of possessing money children have to be able to do English and arithmetic and pass strange tests when they are eleven years of age. You get very bitter because you want your child to stay at school until she is sixteen or eighteen and you're prepared to make sacrifices for her to do so. You know there are many things she can do really well and you are sure she is worth training, but you have to see her lose all interest and grow resentful about her luckier friends whose interests become quite different from hers. In the end she tells you not to worry, she couldn't care less and she's looking forward anyhow to leaving school at fifteen and going to work in a shop. It's worse than the old days because now parents know what their children are missing and they can't do anything about it.'

Anxiety, however, was not even in those days restricted to the parents whose children had not got the coveted grammar selection. Many of them, entering the doors of a grammar school for the first time and learning of the natural importance attached to the completion of the course until the child was at least sixteen and preferably eighteen years of age, were concerned at having to make such a promise on behalf of an eleven-year-old whose natural aptitude and abilities were indicated but not proved. The minority who had been to grammar schools themselves knew the importance of general education before vocational training, but to those who had started work themselves at fourteen years of age, the academic curriculum was a source of mystery and real anxiety. These were three typical problems.

'My boy is really brilliant, they all say so. He ought to go to university. But all he wants to do is to get into the workshops with his dad. He'd get on with his science and maths if only he could feel he was doing the practical side as well but there are no metal-
: : : ol he attends. He's got the idea too that no

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE IDEA

one there is interested in training for industry, that it's felt to be a bit low. I'm afraid he'll leave and throw his chances away.'

'Suppose when my boy is fifteen he doesn't like Latin and geography and so on and would rather take up an engineering apprenticeship! Must I keep him at school even then if I feel it is not right for him?'

'If my daughter makes up her mind she wants to be a secretary and do shorthand and typewriting and she won't work for the Certificate of Education in the subjects she doesn't like; if she's really unhappy is it fair to make her stay because I had to make this promise to get her accepted at the school?'

Let us look back again. The very real difficulties of these parents which developed from the system of having three distinct types of secondary school, were foreseen in the 1920's by many people concerned with education. In a report of 1926 prepared for the Ministry of Education, a section dealing with the policy of separating the less bright from the more bright children at eleven plus approaches the problem.

If it is argued that these children gain from attending a school which can provide for their specific needs, it can be answered that they gain far more if they can mix on equal terms with their brighter comrades in the social and athletic life of the school of which they are both members.

By this time too, the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters, the Higher Education section of the National Union of Teachers, the Labour Party Conference and the Trades Union Congress had all expressed concern at some aspects of segregation or tripartitism as the policy of dividing children into three groups for grammar, central or elementary education came to be called. A possible solution put forward at this time and receiving much support was through the provision of Multiple Bias schools which would provide a variety of courses to suit the needs of all children. The term *multilateral* also became current at this stage and was applied to the method of organizing three types of secondary education in one school under one head teacher. Comprehensive

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

however, emphasizing the single entity of the whole school which would not be divided into sides but exist as a unified whole, proved to be the nationally acceptable name for the system claiming to educate fully the whole ability range of secondary school children.

By the time the 1944 Act had been passed the case for the comprehensive school was growing stronger. The recent lesson that national survival depended on all classes working successfully together was still fresh in the public mind and the Government's intention to foster a 'more closely knit society' was consequently appreciated as reflecting the real needs of twentieth-century western civilization. *Ellen Wilkinson*, when she was Minister of Education, revealed the biggest weakness in our educational system when she said:

We nearly lost this war not because our best brains were less able than the enemy, but because we had not sufficiently trained the remainder of our people. It must not happen again.

The desirability of educating adolescent boys and girls in an environment planned to encourage social unity through mutual understanding, respect and shared experiences, and the urgent importance of establishing schools where the staff, facilities and equipment made possible the provision of a diversity of courses, both academic and practical, which would realize the full potential of the whole secondary school population, formed the foundation of the case for the comprehensive school.

It was these two arguments, the one founded on a social philosophy, and the other proclaiming an educational principle which brought the comprehensive system into the political arena. Its social objective, insisted the critical politicians, was the classless society and the principle of selection having been abandoned, a general levelling down of all standards would inevitably result. This, they said, was the beginning of the end of the British tradition of a varied educational system and the projected schools could be described as centres of mass production, as sausage machines and as monster factories. Local Government election posters made these points very forcibly. It became virtually impossible for the

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE IDEA

general public to look objectively and dispassionately at the new plan for providing secondary education when condemnation of it, or support for it, became rallying cries for political parties. Some people did reflect, philosophically, that all progressive measures and reforms, social, economic, educational had been instigated or adopted by one or other of the political parties and it was unlikely that a change as fundamental as the introduction of the comprehensive system would escape this fate.

The educational principle of raised standards for all children was, however, universally accepted. It was not the objective but the path to it that formed the basis of the controversy. Opponents of the new ideas emphasized their confidence in the secondary modern school and claimed it could be developed until it was acknowledged as equal in prestige to the grammar school, and they wished still to reserve the right of a definable intellectual élite to an education apart from the majority of its contemporaries, insisting that this was the system most suited to the traditional British way of life and not lightly to be overthrown either by sincere idealism or suspect socialism.

Many supporters of the comprehensive school, angry at the intrusion of party politics, denied that the sociological approach to the problem of providing secondary education for all was necessarily a socialist conception. The function of education was to prepare children for adult life with regard to their needs as individuals and as members of society, as it is today. Boys and girls in their formative years, sharing in the common educational, cultural and social life of the school community, could not help but carry into their professional lives, into industry, into the office, a knowledge and understanding of people, a set of values which would form a sound basis for good human relations and the British democratic way of life vaunted by all political parties. The dangers of mass produced education were considered quite illusory by the exponents of the large unselective secondary school. Indeed, they maintained, it was in the small school with few staff that the combination of subjects was very limited and sixth formers in particular found themselves in the position of

discontinuing their education or following the limited curriculum available. Variety of courses, due to the number of staff and the range of their qualifications, would be the keynote of the comprehensive school.

The optimistic belief in the development of the modern school to a stage where it could claim parity of esteem with the grammar school, was felt to be unjustified by those who were attacking the tri-partite system. In spite of improved buildings and equipment it would still be regarded by both children and parents as the school for failures, and as such would not attract a fair proportion of the best and most enthusiastic teachers, already able to select their posts with ease due to the national shortage. It was also pointed out that the really able child proceeding to advanced and scholarship level work in the comprehensive school would have a much wider choice of both academic and practical subjects than was available in most grammar schools, and by the very nature of his broad educational and social training, could choose to proceed to the normal university courses, or qualify admirably for posts in technology, in administration, and the executive sides of industry and commerce, for which too few candidates of real calibre and social adjustment had presented themselves in the past.

So the argument developed and the case for and against was debated. Passions ran high and the controversy became bitter. Bombing had destroyed many schools in the large towns. The increased birth rate during the war meant more and more places were needed. Schools had to be built and the local authorities responsible had sent their new plans to the Minister of Education as demanded by the Act. The London County Council with a Socialist majority announced that it could only fulfil its obligation of providing secondary education for all through a system of comprehensive schools; and in 1946 began four 'interim' experiments. The Durham County Council, by a much larger majority, decided to continue to segregate its children. The majority of the teaching profession disliked intensely the fact that this new conception of the secondary school had been allowed to become a political issue, and many teachers indeed refused categorically to

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE IDEA


accept it as anything other than a natural development in the evolution of true universal education.

By 1958 there were nearly fifty comprehensive schools in Great Britain. Now in the spring of 1959 the number is growing steadily. The brightest children, sons and daughters of doctors, television producers, shopkeepers, bus drivers, share their school lives with the least able children, sons and daughters of doctors, television producers, shopkeepers, bus drivers. The boys and girls all come in at eleven knowing that they can stay until eighteen if they wish, to take advantage of the excellent opportunities offered them. They were not born equally endowed, their home backgrounds supply much or little and add to Nature's injustice, but the comprehensive school can do something to restore the balance, it can for the first time develop an environment where equal educational opportunity becomes a reality.

This is the beginning of the story of Woodberry Down, one of these schools. It is in north-east London in the borough of Stoke Newington and opened in September 1955, three and a half years ago.

2

The School to serve the Neighbourhood



IT WAS a typical early spring day in 1954, cold, misty, and drizzling with rain when I first saw the school which was being built. Surrounded on three sides by uniform blocks of flats, the site looked completely unattractive. The grey spread of the reservoir and the still leafless trees provided a sombre setting. From a record shop across the road an American crooned 'Answer me' to the hurrying shoppers.

I went up to a wooden hut and asked the Clerk of the Works if I might just look round.

'Anything to do with the Council or just curiosity?' he asked.

'I'm being interviewed for the Headship,' I said.

He scratched his head in perplexity.

'Oh! A woman for a mixed school!'

'This I could handle. It was always happening.

'Yes, I like teaching boys. I've taught them more often than girls, and I was in a boys' grammar school during the war.'

He looked at me sadly but was most helpful in a consoling, fatherly manner.

We picked our way across the muddy ground, across heaps of rubble, balancing on what seemed to be desperately narrow boards. The shells of classrooms, corridors, halls, were still wet

THE SCHOOL TO SERVE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

with concrete, plaster and paint; a monstrous complexity of pipes and wires were being thrust and cajoled through small dark apertures; hammers, drills, saws, men's voices shouting instructions or raised in song, motor engines, concrete mixers, beat out the rhythm of an industrial symphony.

'It seems a happy site,' I commented.

'Been an unlucky one,' replied the clerk. 'All sorts of stoppages. Materials, strikes, labour difficulties due to government economics. Cuts in the plans quite different now from what was first on the drawing-board. Come and have a look.'

Over a cup of strong sweet tea, the first of many I was to be given in that warm, friendly hut, I looked at the original schedule of accommodation as first designed by the architect.

'Where's the theatre?' I asked.

'Gone!—and the swimming pool—and the third gym—economy cuts.'

'Why are the staff rooms away in the corner and not centrally situated?'

'They were once above the Head's room and the office. That floor's been cut off.'

'How big is that dining-room?' I asked. 'It looks very small.'

'Should seat about 300 at a pinch.'

'But if 70 per cent or so of the children stay to school dinners,' I protested. 'It could mean at least three sittings. It can't be done.'

He shrugged his shoulders. 'They won't be our problems—they'll be yours—or whoever's lucky enough to get them.'

When I saw the clerk next time, some two months later, his problems had become mine, but perhaps because it was a lovely June day, when swans moved gracefully on the glinting water, and the indigo Plenum air-conditioning towers looked romantic against a blue sky, or perhaps because I still felt the warm glow of possession, albeit illusory, which had come to me at my appointment. Woodberry Down looked beautiful. It was now possible to walk round with the architect's plans and see how they were taking shape.

The octagonal Assembly Hall, planned to seat all 1,250 pupils

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

for whom the school was intended, had something of grandeur in its dark, unpainted, unfurnished emptiness. The main teaching block, four storeys high, had cloakrooms on the whole of the ground floor, and on the other three had classrooms, all of which looked out on to the reservoirs—a delightful and restful view. Although the normal teaching rooms looked small, they were very light; specialist accommodation for geography, history, technical drawing, commerce was provided in rooms twice the usual size to give ample space for equipment and movement. A biology laboratory with preparation room, garden and greenhouse, was sited in this section of the building.

At right angles to this block another four storey building was being erected. On the ground floor was a medical suite of five rooms; on the first floor came a library with a reading room; on the second and third floors were laboratories for chemistry, physics and general science with preparation and lecture rooms. Again at right angles to this block, forming the third side of a large courtyard, the practical block was going up. Staff rooms on the ground floor looked on to the courtyard while two woodwork centres, two metal-work rooms and a machine-shop faced on to the street. I doubt whether the architect intended this design to be part of a publicity campaign for the school, but certainly in future years many small boys anxious for admission confessed to having climbed on the walls to see the exciting machines working. Above the staff rooms were three housecraft centres, with two three-roomed flats to be used for instruction in the domestic arts; and on the third floor were needlework rooms with a special department equipped for vocational training including a power machine annexe. On the top floor, four very light and well designed art studios were taking shape. A lift shaft indicated that when all was complete, pottery to be transported from the studio to the electric kiln sited in the basement, would not have to be carried down five floors. Washing and lavatory accommodation had been provided sensibly throughout the buildings, but although in 1954 it conformed to the requirements of the Ministry of Education I have never considered it adequate.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Equipped with maps and plans, original and modified, I returned for six months to the old buildings of my 'interim' comprehensive school in South London, for I was not to take up my new duties until January 1955. My colleagues chaffed me constantly about the 'marble palace' going up in Stoke Newington, but we all knew too well that when the 'marble palace' was complete with all the facilities and equipment the heart could desire the building of the school had yet to begin.

January came and my quarters and the school were not ready for occupation. A room in the London County Council's Divisional Office, some three miles from Woodberry Down was provided as my temporary headquarters and from this base I worked for six months, helped by a secretary. It is the policy of the Council to provide head teachers of comprehensive schools with assistants who have been trained in educational administration and can take over much of the burden of routine such as correspondence, financial matters, requisitioning materials, and official returns. This was a policy which had my fullest approval, for I had no intention of becoming an administrator. My concern was the children and the parents, the teaching staff and the ancillary staff who would maintain the building and provide our meals and with establishing the right human relations in a school community intended to foster social harmony. This was a task which I knew would take all my time and energy.

The study of the neighbourhood which the school was to serve proved a most fascinating and rewarding duty. While all head teachers planning their organization are affected by the needs of the locality, the very nature of the comprehensive system makes it essential that principles established, aims projected, decisions made are all realistic and realizable when considered against the background of the life and conditions of the whole community. For instance the grammar school can select its pupils, and those candidates it does not like, or considers incompatible with the tone of the school, it can reject. The modern school, on the other hand, like the comprehensive, has often to accept all applicants, but its objectives are more limited. It has not to consider together the

needs of the eighteen-year-old studying for university scholarships, the sixteen-year-old technical apprentice and the fifteen-year-old future shop assistant, in setting its standards.

Woodberry Down, like all the London County Council's comprehensive schools, had a 'catchment area' drawn round it and every boy and girl applying at eleven plus to come to our school from that area, had the right to be admitted. The size of the catchment is adjusted each year according to the number of places available in the school. This policy naturally results in the admission of pupils of all abilities varying from those who are at the top of the grammar selection to those who are near the classification of educationally sub-normal. As I learned more of the neighbourhood I realized, however, that there were other differences of at least equal importance which would tend to divide *my children*.

The very homes were so diverse as to reflect completely different ways of life. There were well-planned municipal buildings and old tenements, expensive detached residences and blocks of luxury flats. On the Woodberry Down estate itself lived families of professional men and artisans. The clothes people wore, the cars parked, the children's toys, the shopping baskets, snatches of conversation indicated *four-figure incomes* and *near-destitution*. There was culture and a strong desire for education; there was illiteracy and indifference; there was sensible discipline and complete lack of child control; the happy devoted family lived side by side with the deserted husband and his neglected children, or the widow with her over-cherished ones.

At first I met little indication of religious convictions. My impression was that Christian worship in its church was not then a significant feature of the life of the estate. Many Jewish people, families who have lived in *this neighbourhood for generations*, are now tenants in the flats. I asked them what importance I should attach to the observing of their feasts, festivals and observances. Did the children insist on Kosher food?

'We're Liberal Jews. We live in a Christian community and believe in sharing as much of the normal life of the people as we can. Of course we keep the Passover—but no—so long as our

children don't eat pork we shan't insist on Kosher food,' I was often told.

Or less frequently:

'I'm orthodox and so is my family. If you don't have a Kosher kitchen providing meals, my children will have to go to a special canteen. And of course they will take all Jewish holidays and leave school early on winter Fridays to prepare for the Sabbath.'

Very often the reply I got was: 'We're Jews in name only.'

'I expected some degree of uniformity here,' I protested. 'If ever there was a neighbourhood without a common denominator it's this one.'

'Well,' said one of my wisest Jewish parents, 'you won't find it amongst us. Show me five Jews and I'll show you six points of view. And remember, Hitler's persecution drove many refugees here and they are often different even from us. They're really orthodox and they don't know yet the meaning of compromise.'

Children, quite black from Western Africa, children brown from the West Indies and India, children olive complexioned from Italy and Cyprus, children it seems from almost all parts of the earth played in the streets around Woodberry Down. Here met differences of native ability, of home background, of financial position, of religion, of race; differences which would give each child the mark of his own individuality and personality, yet which had to be fused at some stage and by some process into a common aim and purpose.

It was for this complex and cosmopolitan neighbourhood that I chose our motto, 'Fellowship is Life', taken from *A Dream of John Ball* by William Morris, showing to all that one of the fundamental aims of the school was to encourage religious and racial toleration and to develop a young community which practised as well as proclaimed the brotherhood of man.

During the early months of 1955, the process of arranging for children to be transferred to the school in September, was going on. One small central school was to close and unless parents decided otherwise, the boys and girls were to be placed on the roll of Woodberry Down. Other secondary schools, some very over-

crowded, were invited to let parents know vacancies were available and application forms were given out.

Primary schools were informed that three hundred boys and girls would be accepted into the first year, all applicants in the catchment area who put Woodberry Down as their school of first choice having priority and the remainder being selected so that the intake was balanced, that is so that it contained in ability a fair cross section of London's eleven-year-old children. For this first year, boys and girls of thirteen years of age who wanted to apply for special technical and commercial courses were invited to sit for a qualifying examination.

While explanatory letters were going out and applications were coming in there were head teachers to meet and discussions to take place on a professional level. Before advice could be given to their pupils, my colleagues very rightly wanted the answers to some fundamental questions.

'Multilateral?'

'No; definitely comprehensive.'

'On what data will you grade initially?'

'From the facts you give me on a form specially drawn up for the purpose.'

'What courses will be available?'

'Academic, technical, and commercial to university standard. To all children who show the necessary aptitude and ability.'

'Homework?'

'Yes, for all.'

'Uniform?'

'Yes, for all.'

'Compulsory?'

'It can't be. The Education Committee can't make it so. But I intend to do everything I can to persuade all parents to see the purpose and co-operate. I believe it will be accepted. Grants and a second-hand clothing scheme will help.'

The head teachers too reflected a cross-section of public opinion—enthusiastic and confident, interested but cautious, cool and sceptical.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

From the grammar schools we received few applications and indeed did not encourage children well-settled into their courses, to transfer. The occasional fourth and fifth former, unsuited to an academic course, to whom we *could* give a technical or commercial education, was accepted. A few youngsters, unfortunately, tried to gain admission with harrowing stories, familiar to teachers and parents, of unfair treatment and 'she has her knife in me' episodes, but these youngsters were told life would be just as bad at Woodberry Down and advised to go back and try harder.

Nearly eleven hundred children were admitted for September 1955. With the very few exceptions already mentioned, every secondary school child applying under normal transfer was accepted. Just under a quarter of the boys and girls who applied for the technical and commercial courses showed enough ability to be advised to take up the vocational studies they wanted. The allocation of places for the eleven-year-olds coming in from primary schools gave us weeks of anxiety. The catchment area provided nearly 80 per cent of the three hundred places. For the remaining sixty places, eight hundred children, many living at considerable distances from the school, had applied. There were three reasons for this—the attraction of a lovely new building in an area of old ones, the difficulty for any of us in the profession to anticipate the exact result of the new system of priority places and the very great desire, on the part of both parents and children, to get a new start in a new school where they had heard all things were possible. If the story of golden pavements drew Dick Whittington to London, the story of educational opportunity drew these eight hundred children towards Woodberry Down. For the majority of them had failed in life—failed at eleven plus. Everyone told them so. Their teacher probably said kindly that they had not been selected for grammar school but not to worry, there were other things in life. Their parents in varying ways had indicated disappointment, wounded pride and the conviction that this disgrace was due only to a lack of effort. Their friends, returning from interviews at grammar schools, painted glowing pictures of gyms and labs and an education that took you to university or at least to a jolly good job.

THE SCHOOL TO SERVE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Many, many misconceptions about the comprehensive school I explained away during these early months, but one accurate fact was firmly rooted in the public mind. The eleven plus did not matter there. How often have I listened, touched beyond words, when a mother or father has said in utter relief to a hopeless weeping child:

'There I told you, didn't I? It doesn't matter. You can start again. If you work hard you'll do just as well as your friend even though she got grammar pass. And you'll have all the things she's got.'

This grim business of final selection, which we were able to prevent happening in years to come by publicizing our 1955 admission facts, was again subject to the Education Committee's desire that 'all other things being equal' places should be given to children living, although outside the catchment area, nearest to the school. 'All other things being equal' referred to the balanced intake, and the intake was not balancing in the catchment area.

It is the unpredictable in human nature that causes the best laid plans of mice and men, headmistresses and education committees to 'gang aft agley'. Our catchment area, offering all children within a few yards of their homes, a school where no effort would be spared to give them the finest possible education did not attract the desired proportion of the most able children. Many parents of boys and girls with grammar selection exercised their right to send their children to grammar school. They were often ambitious, sincere people unwilling to give up the opportunity of a place at a school well established locally for one which in theory sounded good but had not proved itself. This had been predicted. But where we had gone wrong was in assuming that there was in existence already enough community spirit for people to welcome a school established specifically to fulfil all their children's needs. The policy of admitting every child outraged some sections of public opinion. A head teacher gave me the first indication of this attitude.

'I shouldn't take these children if I were you. They have a reputation all over the estate. No backing from the homes, you

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

know. If it gets round you're accepting that standard, you can't expect to get the best.'

Parents supported this view.

'We're willing to do everything you ask. We want a good school. But there are some boys and girls from bad families we won't allow near our children. Their parents will never back you up. Do we have to have the dregs here to lower the standard?'

'My boy has won his grammar pass. He worked hard. He behaved well. Anyone can go to Woodberry Down. Anyone! So he's not going there.'

Anyone can go to Woodberry Down! And so many children with a grammar selection opted out. They opted, this group, not for something, but against something—against the principle that the school should be responsible for all the boys and girls of the neighbourhood and that this included the least desirable with all their problems.

Unfortunately in spite of numerous public meetings and hundreds of private interviews, I was never able to talk to these parents who found the comprehensive philosophy too difficult to accept, for they never came to discuss their objections. Other mothers and fathers were prepared to listen to the explanation of a principle which refused to reject.

'Put yourself in the position of the boy or girl from the bad home—bad in the sense that the parents will not or cannot see to the proper welfare of the family. The child may grow up dirty, underfed, unloved. Through bad example he may use bad language, even learn to steal. He will dislike school, and become unruly. He feels his hand is against every man's and every man's against his. He acts tough, and begins to brood over his grudge against the adult world—the world which seems so kind to the other children in his class—but not to him. All this can happen, and does happen, to children before they are eleven years of age.

Could we, you and I, building this comprehensive school in an attempt to be just to all children, deny this child his place? Isn't his need perhaps the greatest of all?'

So it was that every child who applied in the catchment area

THE SCHOOL TO SERVE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

was given a place. Undoubtedly the acceptance of some known young scamps drove away some good and able children we had hoped to admit. And now, to preserve a balance of ability we had to give most of the remaining vacancies outside the defined area, to applicants with a grammar selection. This was very disappointing, for not only was my first year community split with a tendency for the ablest children to live some distance from the school, but I could not admit brothers and sisters of pupils whose transfers were already arranged, nor help in the many compassionate appeals put up by head teachers, doctors, and child guidance workers on behalf of less able children. The ironic conclusion to be drawn was that inside the catchment area, the very ease of admission rendered it valueless to a section of the community, while outside, where the pressure for places was so great that it was said to be more difficult to get into Woodberry Down than any other school in North London, acceptance was considered an honour of the highest degree.

The meetings of parents and children at which the policy of the new school was explained were lively and enthusiastic. Each one began solemnly, for these were occasions of great importance to all, but ended on a note of gay adventure. Educational plans, about which I shall write in a later chapter, were welcomed, it seemed, even by the children, most of whom had definite ideas about what they had not been able to do in the past and welcomed the reassurance that all but the most outrageous demands could be met in the future. When uniform was mentioned the boys in drainpipes and draped jackets, the girls in tight skirts and sweaters, groaned in misery, but they listened attentively to the reasons for my wanting it—the embarrassment caused to children from poor homes who always seemed to wear someone else's left-off garments—the undesirability of allowing the wealthy show-off, frequently in something new and expensive, to affect others—the pride they would all develop in themselves as members of the school once the practice became familiar—the defeat of our basic purpose of unity if only boys and girls coming in on a grammar selection wore uniform. I promised not to choose dowdy styles and to give a choice of dealers

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

and patterns and colours to suit age groups and different tastes. The London County Council's policy of grants for necessitous cases was explained and private interviews arranged for families needing advice.

The announcement of homework for all as a matter of policy was received with good humour by both parents and children; no one attempted to deny that overwork was not characteristic of the school population of the district. The request for physical education kit, the intention of establishing the habit of hot showers after gym and games, received a mixed reception—cheers from the frustrated athletes, suspicious whisperings from the comfortable slackers who had been able to avoid all but the minimum of full-dress physical activity. As each meeting ended many mothers and fathers good-humouredly pushed shamefaced, grinning children up to the platform so that I could have a good look at young villains who, they assured me, were considered 'the worst in the school' and who were coming to Woodberry Down to make a fresh start. I well remember Albert, one of the most excited of those who came to see me again, a few weeks before the school opened, but on this occasion both he and his father were glum and unhappy.

'I've been put on probation again,' reported Albert.

'You won't want him now—we've all told him so,' said his father. But Albert came and brought with him all his mischief and problems.

One evening a year later, after a detention, he came to ask me to lend him his fare home. Next day Albert returned to me a shining golden penny—cleaned and polished to perfection in the metal-work shop.

I valued that penny and kept it on my desk. I wish I could say I still have it. Another scatterbrain on another evening came to borrow his fare—and absent-mindedly I handed over Albert's penny.

3

Appointing Staff and Ordering Equipment

IN THE AUTUMN of 1954 the vital task of finding the right teachers for the school began. An Advisory Committee, consisting of members of the London County Council and men and women well known in the public life of Stoke Newington and Haekney, was meeting under the chairmanship of the late Dr. G. B. Jeffery, chairman of the London Institute of Education, and performing those duties normally undertaken by the governing body of a functioning school. One of these responsibilities was that of interviewing candidates for teaching posts, and recommending appointments to the Education Committee.

I was very fortunate in being able to discuss my hopes and plans with so knowledgeable and forthright a person as Dr. Jeffery. He would sit hunched at his desk, spectacles in one hand, the other over his eyes as he listened. My experience was slight against his but he was patient. The most encouragement I ever got was, 'Hum—could work, try it', but just as often he would say, 'No, not now, I think; perhaps in a year's time. Rome wasn't built in a day. You've plenty of years ahead.'

In the matter of staffing he was most understanding. 'The headmistress has got to run the show in her own way. She knows the people she can work with. *Let her have them,*' he advised the

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

committee. And the *committee*, again fortunately for me, accepted his view.

We hoped for a staff of young people—well qualified with good experience but not too set in particular grooves, not too attached to the old traditions, able to adjust themselves to new ways of thought and a different approach to education. Above all we looked for enthusiasm, and sought to find men and women not afraid to say they loved teaching and preferred this work to any other.

The assigned staff of the school closing down was given the opportunity of transferring to Woodberry Down, but all major posts carrying responsibility allowances above the Burnham Scale were advertised in the national press for open competition. Over sixty vacancies were available and as ours was the first comprehensive school in London needing to appoint an almost complete staff we hoped to attract some of the many enthusiasts in the profession who had been awaiting the beginning of the new system.

Response to the advertisements was always very good. Eighty-eight men applied for the post of deputy headmaster. It is the Council's policy, in the large mixed schools, to appoint a deputy of the opposite sex to the head teacher. For this post the committee looked for a candidate with a good degree or its equivalent, who had taught boys and girls of secondary age, preferably from eleven to eighteen years, whose experience included some time spent teaching the less able children. Knowledge of the administrative side of a large school and a belief in the validity of the principles on which the comprehensive system was based, were considered essential qualifications. This post, and that of senior mistress, which required a similar breadth of training, experience and approach, were filled by *candidates from existing large, mixed secondary schools run on comprehensive principles*.

A new type of appointment which I had discussed with Dr. Jeffery as vital to my organization was that of a senior housemaster or housemistress, who would be responsible for the development of a strong house system and also assume the position of social organizer. I had often felt that social life in many schools tends to be rather a hit-or-miss affair. Keen individuals hold a

APPOINTING STAFF AND ORDERING EQUIPMENT

dance, run a club, plan a theatre visit and while these are all very pleasant our school was going to need much more as it pursued its policy of bringing together its wide variety of young people in a full life. A central co-ordinated policy aimed at social integration had to be evolved. The teacher holding this post would need above all else a real sense of vocation, an understanding of children and their difficulties and the capacity to help both pupils and parents in the many problems likely to arise. A combination of qualities, including those of the sympathetic welfare worker and the successful youth leader, were needed. This fourth member of my team was again appointed from a London 'interim' comprehensive school.

To assist him in his important department another housemaster, two housemistresses, and four deputies of the opposite sex to the heads of houses were selected for qualifications and qualities similar to those required for the senior housemaster. This team of eight men and women were of course qualified teachers but concerned more with teaching children in the broadest sense than with teaching their particular subjects.

The next group of appointments, those of heads of departments, on the other hand, went to applicants who were first and foremost subject specialists. Good qualifications, whenever possible honours degrees and experience of teaching to university entrance standard, were expected in candidates applying to organize the academic subjects throughout the school, but as this entailed an understanding of the problems of the least able as well as the most able children, preference was given to those who had a practical knowledge of the whole field of secondary education. When it was not possible to find such a candidate, for many well qualified graduates tend to obtain grammar school posts and stay in them, the post went to the applicant who appeared likely to be adaptable to new conditions, flexible of mind and with some theoretical understanding of the new methods and techniques which would be necessary.

For the senior posts in the non-academic and practical departments, degrees were not considered essential. Relevant high qualifications, originality and enthusiasm were sought. The two

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

men appointed as the heads of commercial studies and handicrafts were qualified teachers who had, however, spent some time in commerce and industry respectively before taking their professional training.

Drama became a subject in its own right with a widely experienced head who was expected to organize his subject in close association with the teachers of English.

From a very wide, highly qualified and unusually capable field these twenty-six major appointments were made. It is an interesting fact to note that analysis shows eleven were graduates, three had had three years' special training, three a normal two years' college course, and nine were teachers from the emergency training scheme set up at the end of the war. All these nine men and women are still at Woodberry Down and every one is making a first rate contribution to the life of the school. They are a positive argument for continuing to provide the opportunity for more mature men and women to train for the teaching profession.

By the end of April the task was completed and the remaining appointments made. We were satisfied that the school would open with the inestimable advantage of a capable keen teaching staff. Not all were crusaders for the comprehensive school; some sound masters and mistresses were open-minded, interested to find the solution to the problem of organizing secondary school education and prepared to decide against our system if that was their eventual judgement. But all, I am sure, came prepared to make a full contribution to the success of this new type of school. Their average age was under thirty.

The school-keeper appointed by the committee had been for some months in occupation of his pleasant detached house on the bank of the reservoir. He was to be a most important member of our team, maintaining our lovely school with his six assistants and approximately forty women cleaners. Many new tasks were to be his too; attending to the great oil-fired boilers in an area which looked like the engine room of a mighty liner; familiarizing himself with the complicated networks of public services in the building; learning how the system of public address and lesson change

APPOINTING STAFF AND ORDERING EQUIPMENT

worked; planning with me routes for fire drill and dozens of other routine matters. There were to be two Evening Institutes occupying our building. From early morning, therefore, until late at night on five days a week and for much of the weekend, our school-keeper was to be kept busy, and fortunately for Woodberry Down an indefatigable man who lived for his work had been found.

Easter came. The administration block was habitable and with my secretary and the deputy headmaster, I moved in. This seemed to be a signal to the many boys and girls of the immediate neighbourhood that occupation was imminent and sightseeing possible. Children had to be chased from every corner of the building protesting, 'This is my school and I've only come to see it.' On one holiday a solemn little girl with three small boys, all equipped with sandwiches and bottles of lemonade, had to be thwarted in their intention of spending a day 'looking over the comprehensive school' and redirected to the park. Modern design and layout and large expanses of glass windows have been accepted by children today as an essential part of the new schools. Quite recently my small nephew, seeing a similar building under construction, assured me he had recognized it at once as another 'apprehensive school'.

As equipment arrived the buildings became veritable Aladdin's caves to the eager audiences watching in the unloading areas. Huge packing cases were stripped away to reveal lathes, shaper millers, forges, an electric kiln, power wheels, sewing machines, cookers, and a variety of unclassifiable mechanical items tantalizing to the imagination. Grand and upright pianos, display cabinets, sand tables, typewriters, record players, projectors, vaulting horses, boxes, backs, climbing ropes and wall bars were loudly identified. Of course there were dull moments when such things as books and stationery, blackboards and waste paper tubs came along, but, awaiting better things, the loyal disseminators of up-to-the-minute bulletins stayed.

During one week twelve hundred and fifty desks and chairs were delivered. This boring consignment was followed by the furniture for the flats and interesting speculation followed the unloading of

divan beds, dressing tables and sideboards. Was the headmistress going to live in the school? Perhaps it was going to be a boarding school too! A well-wrapped lamp standard of unusual shape inspired a wail of 'Canes' and an almost instantaneous visit from two mothers, collected by their children from 'across the shops', to ask my views on corporal punishment.

The Council invited head teachers to share in the selection of suitable furniture from accepted designs. Attractive desks and chairs of contemporary style were selected for Woodberry Down. The system of non-locker desks, with each pupil possessing a corridor locker, and a very small one at that, is not completely satisfactory and creates great difficulty in the attempt to train children to store and take care of their own books and other property.

The prefects' rooms with gay curtains of modern design and informal furniture, the staff rooms and marking rooms again attractively curtained and equipped with arm-chairs in two designs and a variety of colours, coffee tables and carpets, began to look excitingly unlike the accommodation to which their future occupiers had been accustomed. The administrative block including my own room became bright and colourful; desks and cupboards in light wood, carpets, curtains, pictures selected to suit our own tastes were arranged. Hundreds of rolls of lino were put down in corridors and as summer progressed more and more workmen left the main site until only those working in the extended dining-hall remained.

Meanwhile heads of departments were visiting the school frequently to discuss the purchasing of textbooks and materials needed for September. The London County Council makes available annually to each school a sum of money, known as a capitation allowance, based on the number and ages of pupils in attendance, to be used at the head teacher's discretion for replacing textbooks and other teaching requirements and for consumable materials such as stationery and chemicals. When a new school opens an increased grant is made to cover the complete initial equipping of the school for teaching purposes. Each master or mistress in charge

of a subject was told by me of his allocation of money and it was then a duty to spend it according to the needs of the children. This task posed problems to almost every head of department, for only a few had had first-hand experience of textbooks and visual aids suitable for the whole range of children who would be found in a comprehensive school. Representatives of publishers arrived with large suitcases of samples. Council inspectors, knowledgeable on all aspects of secondary school standards, came to give advice and offer suggestions. Schemes of work were discussed, draft syllabi drawn up. From all parts of Great Britain, for the occasional day when they could be spared, these teachers came, full of ideas, enthusiastic, often very individualistic in approach. I began to wonder how they would react to each other when for the first time they met together as a team.

Woodberry Down opens- The First Term



THE SCHOOL was due to open on 5 September. Although a Press Day had been arranged for 30 August, before this date articles began to appear in newspapers. On 27 August the *News Chronicle* told its readers that we were 'All Set at Super-School', while the *Star* reported on 'The New School to Please All'.

It is of course right and proper for the London County Council to give journalists the opportunity to see and report on newsworthy schools, but these occasions can become ordeals largely due to the fact that some newspapers are involved inevitably in the political and educational controversy and head teachers, inexperienced in dealing with the press and aware of the immense importance of good publicity, deem it wise to answer questions cautiously. I was in that position and looking back at the reports I find my remarks safely innocuous. Now it is a different matter. Journalists, sometimes from the section of the press which is not enthusiastic on our behalf, come and we talk freely and I know an account will show accuracy and integrity although in some cases the editorial slant is so well known that we can prophesy quite accurately the headings and selection of material. But on 30 August, charming and friendly though the majority of men and women reporters were, I stifled both amusing anecdotes and expressions of opinion and kept to the plain and simple facts.

The *Manchester Guardian* concentrated on the educational plans, *The Times* on the accommodation and buildings. The *Daily Worker* showed particular interest in courses for late developers; the reporter from *Reynolds News*, comparing this school with the one he had attended, wrote, 'If only I could turn the clock back. . . .' All the local papers followed each day's progress—'1,250 kids—and a personal touch', 'The school that is all things to all children', 'Parents living in the area told the *Gazette* "that they couldn't wait for the time when their children could enrol"'. Professional journals published technical articles. The *Oldham Evening Chronicle* commented on our interesting educational experiment, while the *Sussex Daily News* pleaded with the political parties to 'Give it a chance'. The *Jewish Chronicle* correspondent must have left the conducted tour and made her own investigation, for she reported, 'Small parties of boys and girls excitedly loading a series of vans and lorries', and 'carrying a strange assortment of equipment that varied from a dozen cake-baking trays to a pile of modern chairs, from books to saucepans'. On Monday 5 September the *Hackney Gazette* announced, 'L.C.C. Showpiece, £500,000 School Opens Today.'

At 7 a.m. I put in the clutch and began what was to be my daily drive across London—from the south-east to almost the north-east boundary. I had to be at school extra early for there were thirty-five of the most senior boys and girls, selected as prefects, to be instructed in their new duties and the teaching staff, meeting for the first time, to be made aware of the manner in which their individual contributions would be used to build the organizational framework of the comprehensive system.

It was still quiet as I approached Camberwell Green. . . . Delegation of responsibility and the duties of the senior staff would be discussed—the deputy head not only deputizing but dealing specifically with the timetable, coverage of teachers' absences, external examinations, university and training college applications; the Senior Assistant Mistress with the welfare of children in the first two years in her care, supervising staff duties, medical matters, child guidance, the prefects; the senior house-

master organizing his house system and the social life of the school and acting as senior master. I should need to explain the particular role of the administrative assistant in the comprehensive school and which of the routine matters performed by the head teacher of smaller schools were within his province.

Seven-twenty and the Elephant and Castle was showing signs of life. . . . The house staff and the importance of their work, the house system, channels and purpose of contact between subject or form teachers and house masters, the personal record system, all this would be new to many teachers. The positions of heads of departments, too, would need explanation, especially to those teachers from small schools who had never worked as members of a subject team.

Traffic was becoming heavy on Blackfriars Bridge even at seven thirty and a delay is almost inevitable. Once the river is crossed the tempo of life becomes faster in the City, by Smithfield, along Fleet Street. . . . The analysis of the whole intake of pupils, coming to us from more than a hundred schools, educational policy, the courses in the fourth, fifth and sixth years, the experimental timetable, stress to be laid on care of the buildings and equipment, plans for out-of-school activities, a voluntary school fund—all these matters would need explanation and discussion. The establishment of a daily routine to which all conformed, would be of vital importance. This I knew only too well from my past experience, but how to convince those coming from small informal schools where changes of plan or organization were effected by a casual word in a corridor or in a staff room where everyone met—where the behaviour pattern of children was established, known and predictable—this would not be easy. Our pupils already knew how much the school had to give them. Once they knew clearly what we expected, when we expected it and what would happen if we did not get it the imposed routine, set of standards, code of procedure and conduct, so long as it was seen as just and reasonable, would naturally be accepted and become the basis for the tradition and tone we hoped to develop. There was no doubt in my mind that our great diversity of children in these early days needed the

guidance, training and security of a sensibly and firmly administered set of rules. Punctuality and courtesy, on the part of both staff and children, the habit of work, in school and privately at home, care of property, orderly movement about the buildings are all virtues to be encouraged and they are essential to the smooth and effective running of a project as ambitious and complex as a comprehensive school.

At the Angel, Islington, at seven forty-five, I saw my first pupil in full uniform. Cap and blazer showed the school badge with the red griffin of Stoke Newington, the green trees of Seven Sisters and the blue water of our reservoirs. Shining new shoes, well pressed trousers, a white shirt and school tie made him very smart as he crossed the road delivering early morning milk. I was soon to learn what a large proportion of my children earned their own pocket money and often bought their clothes from the little 'jobs', some allowable by law, others not, which they did early in the mornings, in the evenings, at weekends and in the holidays.

Across Newington Green to bustling Manor House, through the Woodberry Down estate and into the empty school car park at precisely eight o'clock I drove. The school-keeper was waiting at the main door. 'Good morning and good luck,' he said. 'Lots of telegrams for you.'

More arrived during the course of the day. A colleague wished me 'Health, sanity and a strong right arm'; the education officer to the council wired, 'Today is the beginning for you of a great educational venture. I send you and your staff best wishes and joy in your endeavours.'

Some of my senior boys and girls had already arrived. I was reassured by their appearance. All smartly dressed in uniform they joined me in a walk round the buildings. Although here and there lately delivered piles of books and equipment were awaiting attention, on the whole the school looked ready for occupation. There must be thousands of school teachers who have never seen classrooms, corridors, cloakrooms, laboratories, in the hours before they are taken into the possession of boys and girls. Desks without a scratch, walls without a blemish, books as yet stiff and unopened,

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

measuring cylinders with dust still powdering the glass—how unnatural it all looked! From the dining-hall an occasional burst of noise indicated that building was still proceeding. I commented on the stillness and someone made the inevitable comparison with the calm before the storm.

After three hours of discussion with me, a lunch session which tended to be exciting and even sporadically uproarious, afternoon subject panel meetings and house meetings, members of staff at four o'clock still looked eager and ready for more. Indeed their enthusiasm reinfected and reinvigorated me, for after months of planning, talking, living the new comprehensive organization, I was beginning to take for granted much that to them was new, startling and needing public justification or explanation. One fact emerged at this meeting without the slightest shadow of a doubt. This was a group of strong-minded individuals with views, opinions and aspirations based on their particular professional training, experience and educational philosophies. When our highly diverse child population was taught by this widely and variedly qualified group of men and women no factory education, no mass produced end-product surely could result!

At seven o'clock that evening there were still teachers talking in small groups in many rooms in the school. I arrived home at 9 p.m., wondering whether every working day would last fourteen hours.

During the next four days the rest of the children, just over a thousand, were admitted. Each morning a year group arrived, many accompanied by parents and friends who came into the playgrounds and, as the signal to come in was given, waved good-bye and shouted 'Good luck' or 'Be good'. Almost all the boys and girls looked unnaturally smart and very proud of themselves. Parents looked even prouder. This unnatural shining 'first day' appearance would, of course, never happen at Woodberry Down again. But about fifty boys and girls were not in uniform. Some said they were 'going to get it on Saturday'. Others, about half the total number, were in outfits associated with the section of the young population commonly known as 'Teddy boys and girls'. They were mostly fourteen- or fifteen-year-olds, and when asked

why they had not conformed in the matter of school uniform, said they preferred what they were wearing; and the manner in which they said it indicated quite clearly that they intended to bring into the school the anti-social attitude and the behaviour pattern which the draped black jacket, the drain-pipe trousers and the string tie, or the skin-tight skirt and sweater, in their opinion, demanded. Not one had any excuse of financial difficulty, for this matter was very carefully and tactfully investigated in the next few days. The girls had a tendency to heavy make-up and the boys to elaborate hair styles. Casual was the way they played the situation, casual, indifferent, cynical—so like so many young enemies of the established order portrayed on films and television. Unfortunately underneath the imperturbable exteriors, there was in some cases already developed a desire for violence and destruction. These boys strolled around the buildings, among the curious, enthusiastic, chattering groups and looked dully where others admired. At the end of two weeks every chain had been taken from the boys' toilets. They made good coshes and their absence caused inconvenience and annoyance. It was possible to distinguish among the highly indignant angry boys the few who were watchful, slightly amused and rather grimly self-satisfied.

At the end of the first week I spoke to one of these lads who was slouching along a corridor. He leaned on the wall, and waited.

'Stand up properly.' I said, 'and take your hands out of your pockets.'

Very slowly he did as he was told. I asked his name.

'John,' he replied.

I reminded him that until he knew our names he had been told to address staff as 'Sir' or 'Madam'.

'I'm not going to do that,' he replied. 'It's against my political principles and my pals think the same.'

'All right,' I said. 'I'll respect your principles, so I'll call you by your name and you call me *by mine*. What course are you taking, John?'

There was a long pause.

'I'm not taking any course that'll keep me at school longer than

I have to stay. I'm leaving as soon as I can, at fifteen . . . Mrs. Chetwynd,' he replied.

The senior master was worried.

'You said at the staff meeting,' he said, 'that you didn't want corporal punishment, that you considered it an admission of failure every time it is used and that any really bad behaviour a teacher felt unable to cope with, should be referred to the deputy head or me for us to decide whether the cane should be used. Well, I've had quite a few boys sent up for insolence, defiance, deliberate destruction, such as carving on the new furniture and I'm not sure we shouldn't make a few examples as a salutary lesson to the rest. After all, most of the children have come here to work. We've got our standards to set, and these few could do a great deal of damage.'

We had a meeting of the house masters and house mistresses and discussed the problem. I explained again my reluctance to resort to caning.

'There are many ways of justifying or condemning corporal punishment but let us consider two. Either we beat the miscreants into submission by inflicting pain, or we hope that by caning them they will lose face and this will act as a deterrent to others. Most of them are inured to corporal punishment and they have come here quite unchastened. On the other hand to humiliate them here will make them hate the school before we have had an opportunity to make them like it.'

It was decided that the heavy hand be delayed, that a policy of wooing, of cajoling, of explaining, of appealing to better natures be attempted. Parents were to be approached and real efforts made, using firmness when it was not already too late, to make the youngsters believe that we were honestly concerned to help them and that accepting a set of rules designed for the ultimate welfare of all was not a sign of weakness. In order to win their confidence we had to demonstrate by our works that we meant what we said in our school motto that 'Fellowship is Life'.

Gradually, as the weeks passed, we won them over. The 'tough' equipment in the workshops, the challenge to all but the most blasé of the new games and athletics, the friendly atmosphere of

the fast-developing out-of-school clubs, the discovery of a flicker of ambition, an unsuspected talent in pottery or dramatic work, the lack of response on the part of the school as a whole to exhibitionism and unco-operativeness and above all the patience and sincerity of the staff drew in daily a boy here, a girl there. By the end of the term every pupil was wearing the school uniform and this first conformity led to other adjustments of attitude to conduct and work. No one would claim that after three months the school consisted only of perfectly behaved hard-working boys and girls. No one would claim it now. The battle for standards, fought against the pull of the streets, of bad company, of indifferent parental control continues in our school today as it does everywhere, but since that first term the levelling-up process has progressed steadily. It is commented on by everyone who has visited the school at intervals over the period of its existence.

The last child without uniform was a nervous, timid boy of about thirteen. His father, well known in the neighbourhood for expressing his strongly-held opinions on a wide variety of subjects, came to see me at my invitation and insisted that he was a believer in freedom and democracy and he and his son would do as they liked. I asked why he had sent his boy to Woodberry Down and he replied:

'For a good education, of course. He's not been receiving it and he's going to have his chance now.'

I pointed out that it was to get the right conditions in the school, to make that good education possible, that we were setting certain standards, but he was not convinced.

'I'm used to fighting for my rights,' he said, 'and my boy will do the same.'

'Do you enjoy it?' I asked.

'Yes,' he said. 'It makes life worth living.'

'Your boy doesn't,' I told him. 'He is very insecure and longs for the comfort and security that comes from being an accepted member of a group.'

'That's just it,' he said. 'He's got to be made to stand on his own feet.'

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

We walked round the school and looked in all the rooms. Every child sat, or stood at bench or easel, looking neat and workman-like in the pleasant uniform. At last he saw his son. In an open-necked tartan shirt he sat amid the navy-blue blazered boys.

As we returned to my room I said, 'It's a hard battle to fight at thirteen, especially when you don't think there's any point in the contest. Your lad finds things hard enough, especially as you and he are so unlike. He's highly-strung, he tends to stutter, he takes fright and covers little mistakes by lying. If you make every day an ordeal for him, and that's what you're doing, I should think his life could become unbearable. Sacrifice your own feelings, in this instance, and let's see what we can do to help him.'

'All right,' he said morosely. 'I hope you know what you're doing!'

October began as a cold month and the unfinished dining-room and kitchens meant no hot meals were available for the pupils at midday. An adequate picnic-type lunch was provided each day consisting of sandwiches, a warm pasty or sausage roll, fruit and cake, but this of course became monotonous. I had made a rule that children staying at school for the midday meal were not to leave the premises. This was for two reasons—because parents prefer to know their children are not wandering in the streets and to safeguard the occupants of the flats surrounding the school from the inevitable annoyance which would be caused if more than a thousand children went out for an hour to play in the vicinity.

Across the road from the entrance to the school, however, was a fish-and-chip shop and its sight and smell was too much for some boys and girls. They kept the money given them by their parents to be paid in at school, and in the lunch break crossed to the shop and returned with their newspaper-wrapped delicacies to sit on the public benches outside our front entrance. Within a short time the grass verges were littered and many a new skirt, blazer or pair of trousers covered in grease. In addition small groups of children, having collected their fish and chips, were seen disappearing into the entrances to the flats, to the home of one of their number who had a key because mother was at work. When

WOODBERRY DOWN OPENS—THE FIRST TERM

we saw what was happening we did a spot check and not one child was able to admit that parents knew what was going on. I therefore put the shop out of bounds in the dinner hour to all children, pending contacting of their homes, and explained that besides disobeying their mothers, fathers and me, boys and girls concerned were indulging in an unhygienic practice in the streets which would certainly not help us develop the tone of the school.

Next day Woodberry Down was invaded by journalists. The *Daily Worker* reporter arrived first, shortly followed by the *Daily Herald* and *News Chronicle*. Cameras were at the ready. Telephone calls from Fleet Street came in all day. We felt we could not issue a statement; this was a matter of internal school organization and concerned the parents and staff only.

We saw no child disobeying instructions during the lunch hour. On their way home at four o'clock two little boys were given half-a-crown each to be photographed inside the shop watching a child, not a pupil of the school, eating chips. The father of one of these children complained bitterly to the newspaper whose reporters were concerned in this incident and no photograph was published. It happened, by a coincidence, that I had a parents' meeting arranged for that evening. By a vote of six hundred to none the mothers and fathers carried a motion supporting the school policy in this matter and expressed great concern at the publicity it had attracted. As one father said:

'Grammar school heads have taken this attitude for years without it being considered a newspaper story. Why pick on the comprehensive?'

Some of the national press published the story the following day. The *Star* in an editorial said:

At first sight it seems an invasion of human rights by the headmistress . . . but training a child in manners and a sense of the fitness of things is part of her job . . . the streets are full enough of slobbering and untidy guzzlers.

I was told by many parents that the typical comment of uninformed local people who had no contact with us was:

'It isn't as though it were a grammar school where you expect the children to be snobbish. Anyone can go there!'

Lost property, during these early weeks, presented a problem of nightmare proportions. The majority of children had for the first time not only all their textbooks, subject note books, writing materials and physical education kit to look after but were wearing unfamiliar garments, hats, scarves and gloves. On some days hundreds of items of abandoned possessions were gathered from the playgrounds, gyms, corridors and classrooms and stored away in the lost property room. Angry parents rang or visited the school and reported 'stolen' books or clothing. In fact very little was stolen. What normally happened was that a child, finding he had mislaid his gym shoes or a book, would wander round hoping to 'borrow' someone else's according to the old adage of exchange being no robbery. In nine cases out of ten when the mothers or father accepted an invitation to examine the lost property room, the missing items were discovered where they had lain, uncollected, surrounded by dozens of topcoats, blazers, shoes and other valuable property. The widespread and apparent irresponsibility was not entirely the fault of the children. In the grammar school the pupils are usually issued with textbooks which will be required for the year and then they are expected to look after them. This is not generally the procedure in the modern or primary school where home study is not normal routine and where books and equipment are collected in daily, and locked away by the teacher. Again 90 per cent of our children were not used to the burden of singlets, shorts, gym shoes, football boots and so on. The situation was not improved by the fact that our small inadequate corridor lockers did not lock and wire compartments provided in the changing rooms for P.E. kit were not easy of access to pupils, except at times when gym or games were time-tabled. Heavy occupation of the buildings by evening institutes made it impossible to be quite certain that our own children were always responsible for the loss of property which they would insist 'disappeared overnight'. Even now, after three and a half years, the problem is still with us, but on a very much reduced scale. *As training in good habits has proceeded so*

WOODBERRY DOWN OPENS—THE FIRST TERM

an awareness of personal responsibility has developed, but the scatterbrain will always be with us and very occasionally, here as in all schools, a child, for one of the number of reasons which can prompt such conduct, succumbs to the temptation to steal.

The scattering of litter seemed in those days as natural to our pupils as breathing. At breaks, along the corridors they came, unwrapping sweets or gum, chewing apples, peeling oranges and a trail of debris marked their passage. Children were asked to look and see what they had done and decide whether they were pleased with themselves—and then told to clean up. Eating in corridors and on staircases was forbidden; but this thoughtless and unhygienic untidiness, which is very prevalent in Stoke Newington, is so deep-rooted that many children needed reminding daily that litter should be deposited in the bins provided. Now they are only reminded weekly!

When, however, the staff and I look back on that first term all other memories fade into insignificance beside the villainy of the public address system. This most excellent piece of electronic apparatus, designed through its radio, lesson change and fire-alarm system to make communication a simple matter in the large school, developed a temperament and temper of its own and drove the teaching staff to distraction while it delighted the children. Pips to change classes came five minutes after lessons had begun, or in the middle of break, or during assembly. Worse still the shrill scream of the fire-alarm, operating through no human agency, sent children hurrying out into the playgrounds as often as three times in one day. Experts came, talked knowledgeably and adjusted valves or the mercury level of a vital component part—but still, as the children insisted, 'the Gremlins stayed in the radio room'. In desperation we asked to have the whole apparatus disconnected and we acquired six hand-bells. But time passed and in common with the children, by Christmas our public address system was learning better manners.

When the staff and I said 'Good-bye' on the last day of term we agreed that we had cemented in the corner stone of our comprehensive school, but we had never been so tired in our lives.

5

Providing a Full and Many-Sided Education

THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE of the comprehensive schools of London, as defined by the Education Committee, is 'the provision of a full and many-sided education in an atmosphere of social unity'. It was our task to see the pupils wanted to take advantage of all the school had to offer and to complete suitable courses, which for many would mean staying on beyond the statutory leaving age. In my teaching experience in all types of secondary schools over twenty years I have never yet encountered one parent who has insisted that a child who has pleaded earnestly to stay on at school be made to leave. The post-war adolescent population expected to be allowed to decide its own destiny; unfortunately many mothers and fathers who guide so anxiously and lovingly the primary school child, find the problem of understanding teen-age development too much for them and, tired of arguing against demands which they know are not to their children's ultimate welfare, give way saying:

'Well, I've advised him but it's no use, he won't listen. He thinks he knows best. So we've decided to let him do as he wants. He'll be sorry in the future but he's making our lives a misery these days.'

PROVIDING A FULL AND MANY-SIDED EDUCATION

Or: 'She listens to her friends who left school at fifteen. She won't be guided by us. All she thinks about is money in her pocket now, clothes and independence. We're prepared to make any sacrifice, but what's the use when she doesn't want it?'

It was the children, then, we had to convince.

In the first term we had begun to establish habits of conduct and work which would encourage the school atmosphere necessary for a standard of educational attainment. House organization and out-of-school clubs were not only opening doors to cultural pursuits, constructive hobbies and interests but were persuading many pupils that life at Woodberry Down could be fun. New friends meant new ideas; there was always a teacher ready to listen to your question as to whether you too might think of becoming a laboratory technician, a nurse, a reporter or an engineer. Knowing that this would always be happening, that for nearly every child growing up in a favourable atmosphere a moment comes when the blurred vision of a wide variety of apparently purposeless lessons comes into sharp focus and the picture of the right future career emerges, we had planned the pattern of the subjects to be taught and the manner in which they are taught, so that the moment of self-knowledge can arrive as late as the fifteenth year or in some cases even the sixteenth year, and still most ambitions be realized. This policy of keeping open the door of educational opportunities for all pupils as wide and for as long as possible is of course the complete antithesis of the system of selection at eleven plus which almost closes the door to advanced, or even a full education to something like 70 per cent of the nation's children and for many of the more fortunate 30 per cent provides such limited academic courses in its small grammar schools that the door for these boys and girls can be said to be only ajar.

The comprehensive educational plan of Woodberry Down has eight major aims:

To ensure that while for initial grading the results of the Common Entrance Examination may provide a useful but limited yardstick of comparative ability in some directions, children will not be numbered nor labelled according to their selection at eleven

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

plus nor will it be assumed that *this* selection corresponds to any particular educational pattern available nor to the length of the pupil's life in the school.

To regard the first three years of secondary education as diagnostic and through the organization of curriculum and syllabi safeguard the right of transfer to faster or slower progressing teaching groups as the need arises.

To provide during these three years a sound basic, general education in as many subjects as possible across the whole ability range ensuring, however, that the academic needs of the pupils proving most able and likely to proceed to external examinations are satisfied and that particular attention is paid to the difficulties of those who are retarded.

To give every child the opportunity of discovering skill in craft, technical ability and creative or artistic talents.

To keep records of the results of carefully selected diagnostic and standardized tests so that, together with the opinions of the teaching and House staff, these may provide the material for accurate assessment of abilities, aptitudes and talents.

To organize the timetable so that, when at the end of three years and after consultation with parents, specialist studies begin, narrow academic or vocational courses are avoided and the maximum amount of general common studies pursued as is compatible with qualifying requirements of university, the professions, industry and other authorities.

To demonstrate in the latter part of school life, through visits to places of further education centres of industry and commerce, civic buildings, theatres, art galleries, that education is a continuative process preparing *our pupils not only to earn a living but to live.*

To make children and parents aware of the comprehensive school system of educational opportunities and to encourage them to ask for information or seek advice from the teaching staff, house masters or mistresses, or the headmistress.

In order to operate this educational plan, however, we needed to have the children for the whole of their secondary school lives.

PROVIDING A FULL AND MANY-SIDED EDUCATION

The essence of its success is found in the common curriculum, in the existence of a core of basic studies in each subject, in the establishment of habits of work at school and at home with the resultant raising of standards of attainment. On this foundation specialist studies in the senior school depend. In September 1955 only the first-year children were eligible for the full benefits of the comprehensive system. For the other years we compromised—approximating as closely as possible to the ideals for which we stood, but limited in what we could achieve by the difficulties inherent in the change from one educational system to another.

The majority of children had come to Woodberry Down intending to try hard. We were however limited in what we could do for the senior boys and girls in the fourth and fifth years. For most of them careers needing the Certificate of Education at ordinary level could not be considered for the general standard of attainment of these pupils was far too low. The same applied to many boys wanting engineering but who had little mathematics and less science. In addition to this lack of background in the basic subjects the children had neither been used to working to the depth required for the serious study of a subject nor to doing homework, and in spite of all the good intentions in the world, they just could not settle down to the hard, systematic grind that was necessary to make up all they had missed. We therefore planned the fourth and fifth year courses realistically, bringing them within the true capacity of the pupils. With the exceptional few, academic studies were pursued; the rest were advised to follow commerce, craft or needle trades, as special studies with the occasional subject, where particular ability was evident, taken up to 'Ordinary' level. Half a dozen sixth-formers, who would in the normal course of events have left their central schools after the five-year course, came to Woodberry Down to investigate the possibility of advanced level studies.

For the pupils admitted into the second or third year forms the prospects were brighter. We had time to drive hard at the basic subjects, especially English and mathematics, before any decision on specialization needed to be made. In addition the very youth of

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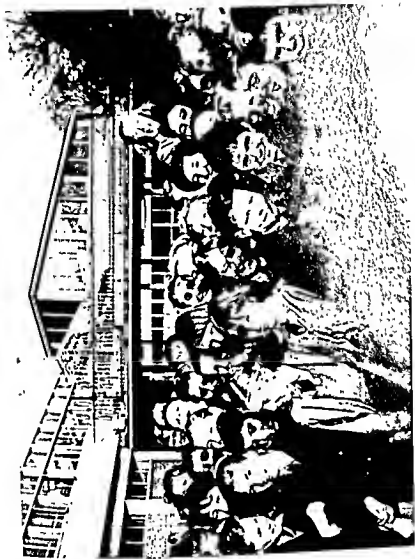
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

these boys and girls increased their educational potential. The school and its equipment excited and stimulated them, they were still on relatively harmonious terms with their parents and would follow advice to get on with their homework. They had no friends who had just left school, luring them into the streets during the evenings. Of the 298 children admitted into the third year between 75 and 80 per cent chose to stay at school for a year following the statutory leaving age and of these the large majority had come originally from secondary modern schools. They left in July 1958, many having followed an academic course leading to the Certificate of Education, others after completing satisfactory special studies in commerce, engineering or needle trades. Eleven are now in the sixth form taking advanced level courses.

These results were obtained after very hard work on the part of most pupils and all the staff but as far as academic standards are concerned, they will not compare favourably with an analysis of the achievements of a group similar in size, admitted at eleven plus on the principle of the balanced intake already described and completing secondary education based on the comprehensive plan. The children who came into our first year in September 1955 form such a group. They are now in the fourth year and in tracing their progress through the school we can see our educational policy at work.

These 300 boys and girls had taken the Junior Leaving Examination at their primary schools and the results were sent on to Woodberry Down. These gave me for each child an attainment mark in English and arithmetic and a third mark, then known as the Intelligence Quotient, which if it is accurate, should be a useful indication of innate mental ability.

Following normal procedure in London, the primary school head teachers had written reports on each child and these gave me valuable additional information about personal qualities, particular talents, interests, abilities and weaknesses, and some indication of parental attitude to education, although of course some of this I had discovered during the admission interviews. Using this background of knowledge we proceeded to divide our



2. A group of First Year Children



3. A corner of the Library

300 children into ten suitable teaching units. Now a vital decision had to be made. Should we stream, should we set, should we teach in mixed ability groups?

The principle of streaming is so well known in English educational practice that even the least knowledgeable parent will show pleasure when his child is promoted from 1B to 1A or 1C to 1B. Setting is a rather less understood procedure. Two or more forms or streams normally but not essentially in one year will be timetabled for a subject at the same time. The children are then divided into teaching units on the basis of ability in this particular subject and so it may happen that a boy who on general attainment is in a low form finds himself in the top set for French where a specific talent has upgraded him. Mixed ability, however, as a desirable method of organizing teaching groups is a relatively novel conception and has become somewhat suspect. Many of the arguments posed against the comprehensive school, that it will result in a levelling-down of standards, that its hidden objective is the classless society, are used against the system which teaches a cross-section of children of all ability ranges together as a group. The child with the intelligence and determination necessary to profit from a university education is taught side by side with the child of average capacity or just escaping classification as educationally sub-normal. There have been occasions when such arrangements have been unavoidable, in every small one-teacher schools in rural districts for instance, but by and large this has been considered a necessary evil by both the profession and the authority. The question whether the mixed ability group is the teaching unit best suited to fulfil the avowed objective of the comprehensive schools—the provision of equal educational opportunity—has sparked off a controversy which probably rages more fiercely within these schools than without.

It is very natural for members of the teaching profession to wish to compare their achievements with those of their colleagues in other countries and it is perhaps inevitable in the present state of world affairs to look closely at the schools which are producing young Americans and young Russians. The large comprehensive

schools of the U.S.A. we know, from contact with both teachers and pupils, tend to produce, through more general courses and later specialization, a sixteen or eighteen-year-old whose academic standard is lower than that of a good pupil of comparable age educated according to English methods. Yet this broad educational approach, which was originally sociological in its objective—for from the great cosmopolitan melting pot of the New World the young man or woman happy to live the 'American way of life' was to emerge—is based essentially on a system of 'grading' which can be more rigid in its application than the *As, Bs or Cs* of our most formally streamed schools. The social life of the American school, however, certainly gives the pupils a confidence, assurance and poise which is very often lacking in our boys and girls of comparable age.

In the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, where in most areas, and certainly in the large towns, universal compulsory education from seven to seventeen years of age is operating, there is a complete absence of any grading based on ability. A very few children, whom we would classify as educationally sub-normal, attend the schools for 'overgrown' pupils, but of the rest the dullest and the ablest work side by side in complete mixed ability groups. Impartial English educationists visiting the U.S.S.R. have expressed surprise, however, at the extent to which hard work and good teaching is compensating for lack of innate ability and the satisfaction the teachers express at what they consider the triumph of environment over heredity. All children in Russia therefore share a common educational experience—for the State insists that it has not abolished a class distinction based on birth and wealth in order to substitute one based on different forms of education. But it must be realized that the whole teaching profession in that country is trained in the variety of techniques and methods which are necessary when children of all abilities are taught together in an educational system which has a social ideology as its inspiration.

While at Woodberry Down we are aware of a degree of kinship with the aspirations of both Americans and Russians we are convinced that it is our duty to plan the teaching of the future citizens

of Britain in accordance with the social ideals of this country and to remind ourselves in addition that whether we like it or not we must conform to the requirements of external examinations and entrance to the universities and the professions as far as our most able children are concerned. Imitation can be unnecessary, unwise and even educationally dangerous. Our approach at Woodberry Down has not therefore been a doctrinaire one. The idea of mixed ability groups appeals to many members of staff; but not enough has been done in this direction, not enough data demonstrating success are available, and certainly there are not the numbers of teachers with suitable experience and technique available for me to risk the valuable few years of secondary education to which all our children are entitled in a wholesale experiment which might or might not succeed. That indeed would justify a charge that we were using our pupils as guinea-pigs! On the other hand rigid streaming based on general ability makes for multi-lateralism, while if a complete 'set' system operated the brightest children academically are always together and opportunities for mixing, which we consider of vital importance to all, are lost.

What then were we to do? Our social ideals indicated mixed ability but we were not convinced that a complete adherence to this method of organization was educationally sound or possible and our first and imperative duty was to provide the most efficient system of education we could evolve. For high standards of attainment we considered 'streams' and 'sets'—the inflexible application of which could defeat our basic purpose of allowing adolescents of all types and abilities to grow up together. The solution we found was the typically English one of compromise—and to compromise in approach and method of organization made it possible for us to preserve the integrity of both our educational and social purposes, the provision of a 'full and many-sided education' in an 'atmosphere of social unity'.

The three hundred first-year children were divided into ten forms of thirty and the deciding factors of the grouping was general ability. Forms were identified by the initial of the form teacher, and although pupils entered the school well aware of their

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

labels as 'winners', 'passers' or 'failures' we are quite sure this grading soon passes *from their consciousness as they group and regroup* for different purposes. During this first year all boys and girls took a general course consisting of religious education, English language and literature, mathematics, history, geography, French, science, art, handicrafts, music, drama and speech training, physical education and housecraft and needlework. From the beginning between a quarter and a third of the time-table was organized in mixed ability groups. In games and athletics, art and crafts, music and drama—all selected as subjects which could be developed without reference to the ultimate demands of external examinations and in which factors other than academic ability were of major importance—*children were taught in groups which consisted of pupils from each of the ten forms.* In some subjects, where it was felt by us all a strong case could be made for the homogeneous teaching group, the time-table was 'setted' and as the year proceeded and we learned more about the true aptitudes of our boys and girls it was possible in mathematics and French to reorganize the form units into fast, medium or slow-moving teaching groups. As a third of our children are Jewish, in religious education three forms, taught at the same time, regrouped into two sets following a Christian syllabus and another taking Modern Hebrew as a language or Hebrew Studies.

In the second year of their course two further changes took place. Pupils who had shown linguistic talent and had reached the top two 'sets' were given the choice of beginning German or Latin as a second language and science joined the 'set' system. The third year continued as the second. Teachers in charge of the departments of English, history and geography considered that at this stage the form was a satisfactory teaching unit for their subjects in which a moderate speed of ability was desirable.

When this three-year basic course is described to our many interested visitors it inevitably draws two questions:

'Can all children learn French? Even those who can hardly read and write their own names?'

Or alternatively:

'Surely so much movement from group to group confuses the children. Don't they need the security of one room, one set of companions when they come into what must appear to them an enormous, complicated organization?'

Between 1955 and 1958 all pupils coming into the school at eleven plus followed the curriculum outlined. In the last year we have decided that for a very small proportion of the children we admit, it is necessary to make other arrangements. These boys and girls, about 3-4 per cent of the normal intake, are for some reason retarded and many are on the borderline of classification as educationally sub-normal with a mental age as low as six years. In spite of skilful attention from sympathetic teachers who understand their problems these children made little progress in any subjects and certainly for them a foreign language presented insuperable difficulties. In addition we were conscious of their need to attach themselves to one person and one place—to find a small safe home within the buildings which, while they were a source of stimulation to all other pupils, to them became vast areas where you could lose yourself. Staff who are experienced in remedial work now accept responsibility for small groups of these children and using special methods, techniques and equipment work in close association with the Council's educational psychologist who spends some hours each month in the school. Parents are consulted when special classes or treatment are considered advisable and discussions with the primary schools before admission by us of children in this category is aiding continuity of approach. The object of this work of course is to attempt to bring back into the main stream of our educational system each child as he or she is ready. When retardation has been due to illness or an emotional upset of not too severe a nature, this may happen after a few months. We accept the fact, reluctantly but realistically, that there may be some children, approximately 2 or 3 per cent of a normal intake, who will need this special form of education for the whole of their school lives. However, although for them nearly three-quarters of the day is spent with one teacher in their own very personally equipped room, they join with their contemporaries for

the mixed ability subjects and of course share in our full social life.

For the rest of the normal intake of children, probably 96 per cent, we believe our common curriculum is satisfactory. Obviously French, or for that matter mathematics or English, taught to the less able child will be different in degree from that taught to the most able, but we are convinced of the psychological value of the 'prestige' subjects to the child who in the atmosphere of the comprehensive school begins to believe, as we intend him to believe, that perhaps after all he can do well. To time-table French in the first year, so far down the intake, but no farther, would be to continue the eleven plus system of condemnation and make nonsense of our creed.

Three years ago we admitted six boys who at eleven years of age could not read. Tests showed there was no reason why they should not learn. At that time we had no specially qualified teacher for retarded children. For some months these boys came to my room three times a week for reading lessons. They hated the elementary books with the babyish stories of 'cat' and 'Pip and I'. Eventually I evolved a workable method based on a bad educational principle—a small prize to the first boy to laugh, and explain why he laughed, at the 'funnies' page of a daily newspaper. Sometimes, it was true the joke was obvious without the caption but this simple incentive and the relaxation of laughter brought the children quite willingly to work. We made some progress. But they were, on two occasions out of three, very anxious to get back to their next lesson—and it was French. One day when I showed some disappointment at getting from my star pupil 'tha bo cik tha blo' when I had hoped to read 'the boy kicks the ball' he assured me that he could write in French and he did. He wrote 'Frère Jaques, dormez-vous'. And he knew what it meant. I should not like my recounting this small incident to be misinterpreted. It does not mean that we believe retarded children who cannot read and write can learn a foreign language miraculously. What it does illustrate is that when retarded children begin to study a new subject, preferably one they associate with academic success and which is not linked in

their minds with earlier failure, they can make great efforts to learn, especially when they are fortunate enough to have a teacher not hidebound by methods unsuitable for his new type of task. And of course nothing spurs on such children to more general effort as does achievement in one particular direction.

We have no reason, again, to believe that the size of the school and the changing groups worry the very large majority of our young pupils. They are trained to write down carefully their own individual time-tables, with teachers' names and room numbers indicated clearly against each lesson. After a few days of fun and games, while they are learning their way about, boys and girls appear to enjoy the variety of the school day. The change from primary school to secondary school is always of vital importance and the children appear to accept all that is new as part of the accepted order of the more adult work.

When the three years' diagnostic course of general education is ending we invite parents to come with their child and join with us in considering the carefully compiled records of progress kept by heads of departments and house masters and in deciding whether it is best to plan a course of studies ending at the statutory leaving age or continuing into the fifth or sixth forms. These interviews are combined with a Careers Convention and this procedure is so vital to our provision of full educational opportunity that it will be dealt with later. The children we are now considering, our eleven plus intake in 1955, opted for their fourteen plus courses last year and as I am writing at Easter 1959 are two-thirds of the way through their fourth-year studies. The percentage leaving at fifteen is higher than last year. This is not due to a decline in enthusiasm which might be the first and most obvious conclusion. It is explained by the fact that children admitted into the second year and upwards when the school began were accepted from a very wide area and many families interested in good education were prepared to send boys and girls a long way to get it. Children reaching statutory leaving age this year were recruited according to the catchment policy—and this means that they have a higher proportion of pupils and parents who, while they have undoubtedly

co-operated in many directions, did not have to put themselves out to secure places in the school and are not positively concerned with pressing for the advantages of a year or more of further education and training. We have then approximately 35 per cent of the original comprehensive intake who will be leaving school at fifteen years of age and although as tradition is established and 'tone' develops this proportion is likely to decrease, it is probably typical of what we can expect in the next two or three years.

The 65 per cent of our original intake, almost two hundred children, who have chosen to stay on at school at least until the end of the year in which they become sixteen years of age, can be divided into three groups. Approximately one-third are following academic courses leading to the Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level; another third are taking technical or commercial courses combined with some subjects in the Certificate of Education; the remainder follow special studies in craft or general commerce and may take examinations of the Royal Society of Arts or in exceptional cases one or two subjects, in addition, in the General Certificate if they so wish. Some pupils in the last group will, however, take no external examination.

For all these children the 'set' system operates in English language and literature, mathematics, French and the sciences. It is therefore obvious that specific aptitudes or talents can be encouraged, for the time-table makes it possible for vocational studies to be combined with full extension of ability in general subjects. This method of organization, combined with the continuation of mixed ability groups, pursues our educational and social objectives into the fourth and fifth years of school life.

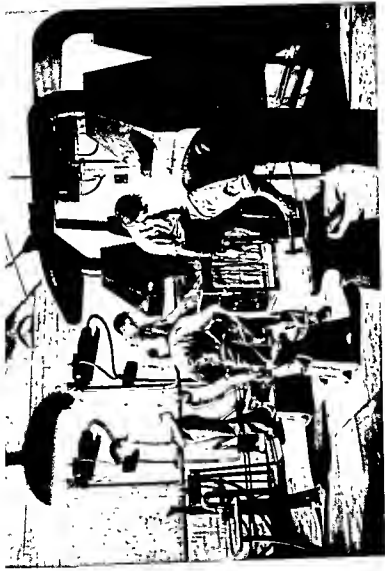
The advantage of a large specialist staff can be judged at this stage by the range of opportunity available to our pupils through the variety of subjects from which they can select their courses. According to their ability they may choose up to nine subjects for their Certificate of Education from religious knowledge, English language, English literature, British history, economic history, economics, geography, geology, biology, chemistry, physics, physics with chemistry, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Latin,



4. The Mechanics Laboratory Equipment, made in the Workshops



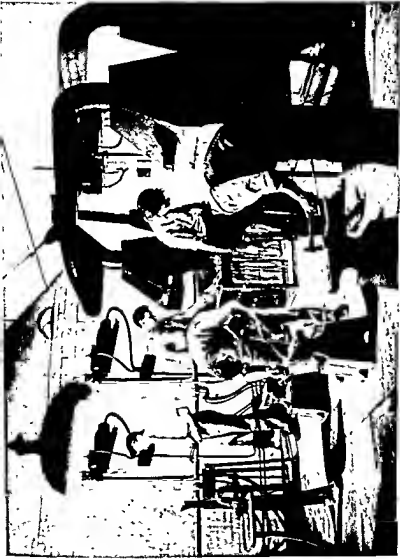
5. A demonstration to Fifth-formers in the Physics Laboratory



6. Boys in the Technical Course in an Engineering Workshop



5 A demonstration to Fifth-formers in the Physics Laboratory



6 Boys in the Technical Course in an Engineering Workshop



7. A Woodwork Centre

PROVIDING A FULL AND MANY-SIDED EDUCATION

Hebrew, mathematics, mechanics, art, music, commerce, technical drawing, woodwork, metalwork, needlework, and cookery. Any combination is, of course, not possible but options are carefully grouped with the maximum flexibility to make possible a balanced course which has its bias in the direction indicated by the child's abilities, talents and inclinations. It must however be admitted by us in common surely with the majority of schools in Britain, that we would prefer to give the future scientist or technologist more of the liberal arts and humanities and the future arts graduate more of the sciences and crafts than the pressure of faculty requirements for university entrance makes advisable even as the child begins his pre-Ordinary Level year. Fortunately these limiting circumstances do not apply to all children in the first group nor to those in the second and third divisions who will probably leave school at sixteen. We have of course to bear in mind various qualifications for articling to law and accountancy, or conditions of exemption from the first year of national courses, such as those in engineering, but on the whole a better balanced curriculum is possible for the pupils who have not to aim at high level marks in 'Advanced' or 'Scholarship' level subjects.

The entirely relevant question now is whether the advice given by the school after the three-year general or diagnostic course corresponds closely, or fairly closely or not at all with what we might have expected from the results of the eleven plus examination. Our records show that most children who did very well in the Common Entrance tests and obtained easily a 'Grammar' selection, are still progressing very satisfactorily in academic subjects, but that many boys intend to enter some field of technology and find the technical facilities of the school most helpful. Nearly one-third of the 'border line' passes found a vocational course in engineering or commerce more suited to their abilities and inclinations. These would have been the 'early leavers' in a school offering a more narrow curriculum. On the other hand enough boys and girls who did not reach 'Grammar' standard have developed well enough academically to prove the point that the present division operated in most counties between those who can profit from

6

Schemes of Work



THE HEADS of departments appointed shared one outstanding characteristic. They were all vitally interested in the teaching of their particular subjects. Enthusiasm, however, can become uncompromising and in our joint task toleration, open-mindedness, and a give-and-take approach were necessary qualities. In the grammar schools where the majority of these members of staff had been teaching, university scholarships and good 'Advanced' and 'Ordinary' level results in the Certificate of Education showed the hall-mark of efficient teaching and the justification of the selection of material taught. This did not necessarily mean that I expected to find a tendency towards narrow specialization and over-formality—indeed I had evidence enough to demonstrate that the men and women who were now responsible for the organization of the subjects in our curriculum were likely to be bold in experiments with the content of their syllabi and aware of the value of breadth and depth of interpretation in its presentation. They came into the comprehensive school, however, very conscious of the fact that to many people, both inside and outside the teaching profession, the new system of secondary education would stand or fall according to the standards it achieved in external examinations. Again and again I would listen to comments such as these:

'What we need are a few open scholarships. When we've got those we shall have justified ourselves.'

'Of course we have to consider "the others". They are part of

SCHEMES OF WORK

the school. But we must do justice to the really able children whose parents have sent them here instead of to established grammar schools.'

'We must concentrate on academic success and show that we have the staff, equipment and will to reach the highest standards.'

It was very understandable that these views were widely held for we all subscribed to the principle that children of good academic ability should be trained in hard intellectual study which would lead them to the universities and professions. But we had first to make sure that, from the whole of our intake of pupils, we were able to assess accurately all those who were suitable for such courses and this meant a diagnostic period during which we could discover not only the abilities and aptitudes of our boys and girls but those qualities which are ultimately almost as important in educational achievement, such as determination, 'stickability', the capacity for deep, straight thinking. The comprehensive school, however, must do more in these early years than sift out pupils who are suitable candidates for higher education of a purely academic nature. Through its skilled specialist staff and practical equipment it must ensure that all children are given the opportunities to discover themselves; the future technologist, technician, craftsman, business executive, accountant, secretary, fashion designer or commercial artist must see the path to the fifth or sixth form and beyond as clearly as the future doctor or lawyer or teacher.

This interpretation of the function of the junior section of our school led to two obvious conclusions. Every child should learn sufficient of each subject to make transfer at any time to another group in the same year possible and a larger than normal number of subjects would need to be studied by all our pupils who would be seeking to discover their natural bent and talents. In drawing up their first syllabi the heads of departments then had to select a common core of material in each year which they assessed as suitable for all children but so develop the central themes for the most able and so reduce them to simple terms for the least able that each child worked to complete capacity. And to this most difficult and challenging intellectual exercise it was vital to bring

a fresh positive approach to the problem of satisfying the needs of our cross-section of pupils and to avoid the unrealistic if well-meaning desire to provide a watered-down 'Grammar' course which would do justice to none. The task became a little easier when it was appreciated that movement would probably be between adjacent forms or 'sets'—from four to three, or eight to nine—and that a sudden development necessitating a rise from seven to one, for example, was very unlikely.

The large number of subjects to be studied in our wide curriculum during the first three years obviously resulted in a smaller allocation of teaching time to all than was customary in other types of secondary school where from the beginning there were more limited objectives. This was again a matter of some concern to my keen senior staff who saw our brightest pupils at a disadvantage compared with their contemporaries in the formal grammar schools. Where we time-table art, mime-drama, handicrafts, music and a generous allocation of time to physical education in other places the demands of academic standards crowd some of these subjects out of existence at least for the most able children, who, it must be admitted, following their more narrow specialized courses are certainly capable of passing external examinations even though it is open to doubt whether they become well educated human beings. I am not convinced, however, that an educational plan such as ours which, while it does justice to academic subjects, seeks through aesthetic experience, creative self-expression and practical work to keep emotional and intellectual development in harmony together, will fail to produce, when the time for specialization comes, mature, stable boys and girls ready to take the discipline of advanced studies in their stride. When this time does come, and for some of our pupils it has arrived already, a narrowing of the curriculum is inevitable in order to give the time necessary to subjects required in qualifying examinations, but we look forward to the day when the faculty requirement at the universities makes it possible for schools to continue a truly liberal education into the sixth form.

Since September 1955 all these schemes of work have been

SCHEMES OF WORK

modified, enlarged, or rewritten following panels of meetings of the teachers in every subject department. While each expresses the individual approach of the group of staff concerned they all conform in basic pattern to the over-all educational and social policy of the school.

The English department, probably the most important in the school, announces as its primary aim the promotion of the 'children's understanding and use of English as a means of communication'. With a minimum of philosophizing it gets quickly to the proper functions of the teacher which are to encourage accurate writing; to widen and deepen the child's experience of reading upon which imaginative response, a vital motive power behind written work, depends; to develop self-confidence through oral lessons; to link the more formal aspects of English, vocabulary and comprehension, grammar, spelling, punctuation to the more informal at appropriate stages.

While these are very correct objectives they are not in themselves peculiar to the organization of the comprehensive system. It is through the detailed syllabus itself, with its growing variety of additional guidance, issued to all English teachers in the form of duplicated booklets, on such topics as library research schemes, methods of setting and marking examinations, the purpose and keeping of record cards that the steady and consistent policy of the department to raise standards across the whole ability range becomes apparent. And because achievement in all other subjects to a greater or lesser degree, is dependent on written English or comprehension the department, after a series of staff meetings to discuss the matter, made two suggestions which have been adopted. First, all children coming into the school have, in addition to their normal English lessons, two hours a week devoted to a basic course of instruction in handwriting, spelling, punctuation, simple grammar and the general arrangement of written work. Other heads of departments were prepared to give up a little of their normal time allocation for this work to be done, for they had been finding that their own lessons in the early years often became elementary English lessons.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

The second suggestion was that the form of the written work set in all departments should follow an agreed pattern. For instance 'Write an account of ' means little to a child still learning how to complete a sentence or form a paragraph. It is obviously helpful to all teachers to know at what stage they can expect consecutive writing in the form of paragraphs corresponding to the sub-divisions of the topic, or a formal essay and through this system of co-operation that information is now available. Bad note-taking, a common practice in schools, is attacked by the English specialists who report:

Much oral work in all subjects has to be conducted in word and phrase English; the children learn from diagrams, experiments and maps for much of the time. Consequently we are doubtful of the language value of notes given to children before they themselves can write reasonably accurate sentences and fully recognize notes as notes.

Training in useful note-taking comes in the third or fourth years. Further discussion at staff meetings led to the adoption of a common system of marking mechanical errors in written work so that in all subjects the essential task of raising the standard of literacy, a national, as well as a comprehensive school problem, should continue.

The head of department of mathematics states his aims precisely:

To provide for all pupils a broad, sound introduction to mathematics and training in the fundamental skills necessary for everyday affairs; to discover mathematical aptitude;

To furnish opportunity and the necessary stimulus for further advancement according to the capacity, particular interests and ambitions of each individual pupil;

To develop in the pupils a lively awareness of the part played by mathematics in shaping both the ancient and the modern worlds.

Setting in this subject is considered desirable at the beginning of the second year, all groups studying 'the same topics related to

everyday life', but the needs of the abler pupils are given careful attention:

They will be able to combine this broader approach with the more rigorous treatment required as a foundation for advanced study. The pupils will be regrouped in their fourth year into academic, technical, commercial and general sets according to special ability, particular interests and the requirements of their intended careers.

The scheme of work is set out in detail. The common core sections, which all children throughout the year are expected to complete, are indicated and a further symbol marks items which groups of average ability can postpone until the specialist staff consider an appropriate stage has been reached.

In order to keep the interest of our wide range of children all processes are taught through the study of selected topics. In the first year some of these are running a home, shopping, hire purchase, radio and railway time-tables, acting as treasurer to a club, the finances of running a car. Second year topics are again typical of the child's everyday interests—garden planning, interior decorating, practical surveying, the calendar. In the third year journeys abroad, astronomy, determination of heights of local buildings, and local government expenditure are used as interest points.

In the fourth and fifth years the demands of the Certificate of Education control the syllabus to a large extent, but where children are not taking an external examination in mathematics, special courses with a vocational bias have been drawn up. This department keeps up-to-date in modern thought, techniques and equipment. As far as apparatus is concerned what it cannot acquire through our normal capitation allowance, it obtains on long-term loan, hoping to persuade our authority that items such as a calculating machine, in use in the school at the moment, should be considered desirable in the schedule of major equipment.

The function of the teacher of history, in the opinion of the head of this department, is of vital importance in the education of

all children for in these lessons they should progress through knowledge to an understanding of the world and its people. He sets out then:

To give all pupils an insight into the scope of human progress technical, economic, social, political and cultural;

To show how difficulties have been overcome through co-operation and to give children confidence in the future. For this purpose to give all pupils an understanding of the fundamental features of the main stages of human development:

To develop in all pupils an understanding of the main elements of the political, social and economic structure of Britain today;

To engender a sense of belonging to a community and a sense of kinship with the great Englishmen of the past;

To teach respect and tolerance for people of different languages, colour, and customs and appreciation of their achievements and contributions to the main stream of human progress.

Subsidiary aims are defined as giving an idea of causation and a time sense, of encouraging orderly methods of reasoning and of collecting, assimilating and presenting information.

After three years' experience at Woodberry Down this head of department feels he can comment on the policy of teaching a common core of studies to all children. He says:

Experience confirms the value and possibility of a common syllabus, universal homework, common examinations, etc. Certain difficulties arise with the more retarded children from the fact that the teachers experienced in that work are, naturally enough, general subject teachers and therefore particularly dependent on the textbooks, and nobody seems to have written textbooks of primary level linguistically but of worthwhile secondary level in historical content. Publishers are at the moment being canvassed in this matter in preparation for a discussion of the general problem with the teachers of the forms concerned.

The plea to keep a place for the humanities in the time-table of future technologists, technicians, scientists and mathematicians comes constantly from the history staff and in co-operation with

SCHEMES OF WORK

other departments they are preparing a course on science in history which they hope will be taken by all members of the sixth form irrespective of their specialist studies.

The department of geography has not had an easy passage since the school began. The original head, who left after two years to take up a post as deputy in another comprehensive school, was a firm believer in organizing his subject through the 'concentric' method of teaching which is based on the selection of topics to be treated *first on a local, then on a national and finally a universal scale* as it were in ever-increasing circles. Our new head of department dislikes this scheme, and as at the time of his appointment a change was possible without affecting any pupil's prospects in external examinations, a new syllabus has been drawn up which, it is claimed, should satisfy many needs through a common basis of instruction. It sets out to stimulate the innate curiosity which every child possesses and to direct it where it can most profitably be satisfied. The regional approach, dealing with places and people, can be used to invoke a sense of wonder. The teacher of geography, it insists, has a social duty to perform in giving his pupils a balanced view of the world:

At an early stage this involves a knowledge of the world's anatomy, the disposition of continents, oceans and the countries of the world. Else we shall turn out still more geographie illiterates blind to the space relationships of the modern age. He must teach that all parts of the world, viewed as a community, are inter-dependent and that no power, however vast, is, in fact, self-sufficient.

He must accept as a duty to each individual child the task of teaching that child to the limit of his ability, to bring him in touch, through field work, with the realities and beauties of the physical world and to instil in him an appreciation of landscape and how it came about. Finally the teacher must not ignore the fact that each child will have a living to earn and that geography has a direct instructional value as an entrance to a growing range of occupations.

All children take a course of general science in their first three years. Since from the fourth year onwards science studies are inevitably specialized either for the purposes of preparation for external examinations or biased in a vocational direction, the basic course is intended to be complete in itself. In the first and second years the work is grouped round selected topics of an everyday nature and the various branches of science are not completely separated nor treated formally. Under a general heading 'Ground to be covered' subjects to be dealt with are listed under sub-titles of physics, chemistry and biology in sufficient detail to extend intellectually the most able of our pupils. Teachers taking the less able children still cover the chosen topics but in less detail and with a suitable approach.

First year topics are 'Air' and 'Water'. The 'Ground to be covered' is defined as follows:

Picture of the earth as a sphere in space, retaining atmosphere by force of gravity, receiving heat and light from the star round which it moves, satisfying conditions of temperature, moisture, oxygen, etc. to support life as-we-know-it.

Second-year topics are 'Food and Warmth', 'Sensitivity and our Senses'. During these two years subject matter and order of presentation is the same for all groups of children, even though pace and the amount of detail differ. In the third year, when abilities and aptitudes are becoming obvious, some bias is introduced and the teaching develops more formally. The work is divided into three separate terms, one biology, one chemistry and one physics. The time-table is so planned that classes can be rotated in order to be taught by the appropriate specialist teacher. As a result of this organization all children who have shown real scientific ability during this three-year course should find they can continue their studies in the senior school.

Human reproduction finds a place in the science syllabus of most schools but it is introduced more commonly towards the end rather than at the beginning of the course. We have decided that this subject is most naturally treated as a separate section of the

SCHEMES OF WORK

first year scheme of work. The head of department insists:

Attempts to approach 'gradually' or 'carefully' through reproduction in plants and animals can only lead to sex education proper being left too late in the child's development, and most attempts to integrate sex education into the science course seems artificial and hypocritical rather than based on the actual needs of the child's education.

Halfway through the first term each child is given a copy of Dr. Cyril Bibby's *How Life is Handed On* to take home and discuss with mothers and fathers. After a fortnight books are collected in and informal discussion invited. Film strips *How Life is Handed On* and *Human Reproduction* are shown and questions concerning them answered. Separate from the boys, usually after school or in the dinner hour, the girls are joined by the female physical education staff for a talk, films and the issue of booklets *Very Personally Yours* dealing with menstruation.

All staff concerned with this aspect of the children's education report very little embarrassment and a simple frank approach. Boys and girls accept the fact that teachers are more used to answering questions than mothers and fathers and of course have books and films which are not available in a normal home. My staff and I, like all teachers, doctors and welfare workers know that if sex education in its fullest sense, embracing the moral aspects as well as the imparting of facts alone, could be given to each individual child by a sympathetic and understanding parent, that method of instruction would be better than anything we can do. But what we are doing we honestly believe is best for our children in our neighbourhood, and the head of science reports:

Not one single complaint or unfavourable reaction from parents has so far reached us. The books and film strips were put on display and were examined by scores if not hundreds of people. Many parents have indeed expressed gratitude for this part of our work and have inquired about the purchase of textbooks for their own use with other children.

Sex education in its moral aspects is almost impossible in the

school, not the least of the difficulties being the different attitudes of the religious denominations to the problems on which senior children especially are likely to seek enlightenment. It is a fairly common occurrence, however, for individual boys and girls to approach house masters and house mistresses for personal advice and occasionally I myself have talks with groups of senior girls when I have reason to believe they need help or information. Strangely enough a negative moral training exists in the majority of homes where many parents will give serious warnings by innuendo in matters they refuse to discuss openly. In as far as we can see any result of this policy of teaching the facts of life cleanly, simply, accurately and early it is possible to say that boy-girl relationship over the whole age and ability range is most wholesome and healthy and I have never before been in a school where 'dirty' note-passing and obscene writing on lavatory walls are almost non-existent practices.

In the modern language department the large-scale experiment of teaching at least one foreign language, French, to all pupils is proceeding. The oral method is used, as indeed it is in German, Italian, Spanish or Modern Hebrew, partly because we consider languages are learned primarily to be spoken, and partly because many of our children would find a concentration on the written word and grammar outside the scope of their abilities. As 'sets', based on linguistic aptitude, are formed, those children who will be taking external examinations at a later stage are introduced to the more formal aspects of language study, but the department does not intend to emulate those schools which in the past have sent abroad pupils who have had a Higher School Certificate in French but were too inhibited to utter the simplest phrase.

The task of teaching French to the less able children, a policy which we have adopted as educationally and socially desirable in the comprehensive school, provides a source of fruitful discussion at many panel meetings. The impatient specialist, unwilling to experiment whole-heartedly, tends to insist the job cannot be done. But on the whole the staff is aware of the necessity of developing new techniques and methods especially for the less able children,

SCHEMES OF WORK

of preparing and using simple equipment such as card games and material for 'shops', and of keeping careful records of experiments, both successful and unsuccessful, so that eventually we can have an authoritative statement to make on the attempt to teach a modern language successfully over the whole ability range. Success with the least able pupils has been defined by the head of department as follows:

If at the end of three years such a group of pupils can carry on a conversation in simple phraseology about known everyday matters and can volunteer information about a given subject, say, a picture, even confining themselves to the present tense and the simplest vocabulary we shall have achieved what we set out to do.

Should we find we cannot achieve this standard after an honest and realistic attempt based on the best methods of approach we can evolve we shall have to ask ourselves whether we are justified in continuing for psychological and social reasons an experiment which has failed educationally. No one should succumb to the temptation of answering this question hastily.

It is possible for children with linguistic ability to learn Latin or German from the second year onwards and, if a career needing a third language is envisaged, to begin this course of study at an appropriate stage. It will be obvious, however, that in the fifth and sixth forms where it will be remembered there are pupils who transferred to us having already begun a secondary education which was inevitably more limited in scope than ours, the full and eventual pattern of modern language organization has not yet developed. When the school has grown to its full comprehensive stature there should be five or six modern languages available to 'Advanced' Level standard as well as Latin and Classical Hebrew.

The head of technical studies sets out to do far more than to train technologists, technicians and craftsmen. All members of this most harmonious of departments are as concerned that the boys who will never earn their living handling wood or metal should profit educationally from the time they spend in the workshops, as they are to encourage the ablest boy to aim at a university

course or the good one at exemption from the first year of his National Certificate via relevant G.C.E. subjects. The department has a ten-fold objective:

To provide a means of expression which is denied in other subjects.

To impart manipulative skill and sound technique.

To stimulate the intellect by the making and reading of working drawings and to give a means of expression in the universal language of mechanical drawing.

To provide an outlet for creative ability, imagination, artistic expression and inventive ability.

To create an appreciation of good craft work and sound construction in design in wood and metal.

To know the pleasure of achievement.

To provide a graded course which will develop the related physical and mental processes.

To develop patience, perseverance, self-reliance and foresight.

To stimulate a wide interest in craft through activity, study of materials, tools, techniques and processes.

To produce a scheme of work sufficiently exacting to require effort but not so difficult as to lead to discouragement.

The scheme of work in operation makes it possible for anyone to visit the workshops and find boys from the first to sixth forms, from the most to the least able, concentrating, intent, completely absorbed with their work and above all happy. Whether a retarded eleven-year-old is laboriously making dad a pipe-rack or an eighteen-year-old eventually proceeding to training college to become a technical schoolmaster, is putting the finishing touches to a first-class bookcase, or a fifteen-year-old leaver, hoping to find a garage job, is riveting and soldering, the picture is the same. Corners of the workshops become centres for design and artistic display; complete room units, equipped and furnished by the pupils, go up: boats are built; a blue-print machine, refused on the grounds of expense by the Council, is made, most efficiently, for seven pounds when the commercial model would have cost eighty.

Visits to industrial centres and factories, with personnel officers,

SCHEMES OF WORK

works managers and sometimes company directors returning the compliment by spending a day with us, keep the boys aware of their potential share in the productive life of the nation. Integration with other subjects, mathematics and science, geology, history and art broaden the scope of the work and prevent the enthusiasm of the department developing a self-contained technical colony among its benches and machinery.

We have no facilities for vocational training in housecraft and as a result the department has broadly educational aims throughout the course:

To make the children self-reliant.

To develop a community spirit where children work for the good of all, rather than for the individual.

To teach powers of reasoning; to learn to follow written directions.

To help the children to appreciate and to aim at a high standard of attainment in practical work.

To understand the value of criticism and to learn to criticize their own work.

To equip the children with a knowledge of how to run a home economically from the point of view of time and money, at the same time keeping a happy atmosphere.

To seek to influence pupils in their use of leisure time, hoping thus to sow the seeds of good citizenship.

Even though few girls intend to take up housecraft as a career everyone sees herself as an ideal wife and mother and the atmosphere in these rooms too is one of absorbed, contented work. The syllabus itself gives girls of all abilities the opportunity to find full mental satisfaction in the variety of tasks; but it is an interesting reflection that some of the future homes in London that will lack the cultural background we should like will not invite criticism of their washing, polishing or steak-and-kidney pudding. A priest visiting us beamed at the happily occupied girls and said, "That's lovely. Make sure they can look after their families. Make them want to. It's the way of true contentment." I judged this not to be the appropriate occasion to discuss female emancipation and the economics of mothers at work!

This course can lead to the Certificate of Education and some girls like to take the examination, especially as it is partly practical. But for the majority there is no burdensome restriction on the subjects the teachers can select as suitable for training our future home-makers.

Needlework is a subject in the basic course. Some girls choose to combine it in the senior school as part of their general education; others in the fourth year begin two years' vocational studies in what we call at this stage needle trades. The educational purposes of needlework are varied. We set out to develop manipulative skill and to encourage creative ability and an appreciation of good craft; to teach discrimination and the value of constructive criticism; to instil a knowledge of fabrics; to develop colour and fashion sense and good taste. The practical work itself should result in a thorough knowledge of basic dressmaking processes, the ability to use and adapt commercial patterns, and to design and model from bodice blocks and stands. The care and use of tools and an appreciation of economy are taught throughout the course. Girls taking needle trades as special vocational studies follow a more advanced syllabus which prepares them for either a career in haute-couture or for one on the wholesale side of the garment trade. Design, modelling, all types of machining and complex processing are taught, and frequent visits to dress shows, wholesale houses and work-rooms are arranged by the head of department who intends to keep the senior girls of post-statutory leaving age aware of the value of the training they are receiving. Again the three-year basic course makes it possible for pupils of all abilities to take up specialized studies providing they show an aptitude for the subject.

Commerce, in common with other vocational studies, begins only in the fourth year, but the records of progress in the diagnostic years indicate the children who are likely to profit from a commercial training. Four courses are available. The first is for pupils of good academic ability, particularly in English, who can combine shorthand and typewriting with general subjects taken to the Certificate of Education standard. Boys and girls of comparable

SCHEMES OF WORK

standard, but whose aptitudes are mathematical, replace shorthand with accounts. For children of less ability a general clerical course of copy and invoice typing and routine office procedure is combined with general education. The most able pupils are encouraged to take their general education in as many subjects as possible to the end of the fifth year and then, after the Certificate of Education at ordinary level has been obtained, to go into the sixth form for an intensive commercial course.

Commerce pupils are being trained for the business world. The aims of the syllabus are realistic and concise and are set out as follows:

In shorthand we intend to train students to record the spoken word quickly, effortlessly, clearly, neatly and finally to be able, with equal ease, to transcribe the notes taken down through the typewriter, longhand or voice. Students should acquire the ability to read printed shorthand as rapidly as the written word. Our aim in typewriting is to produce competent touch typists able to perform expertly and accurately all the usual general duties expected in the average business office. The sixth form course is planned to produce responsible, reliable and competent secretaries with good personal and mental qualities—able to cope with unusual or unexpected problems as well as possessing a thorough training in the mechanics of typing, shorthand and the necessary knowledge of business control.

Sixth form girls are given the opportunities through the syllabus, of undertaking tasks which develop the necessary personal qualities of tact, good manners, punctuality, loyalty, neat, well-groomed appearance, social poise and initiative.

All subjects to which reference has been made in this chapter are taught either in form units which are based on general ability or in 'sets' so organized as to cater for specific abilities or special aptitudes. I now turn to those subjects included in our mixed-ability experiment.

The Mixed-Ability Experiment and Religious Education

EACH YEAR the school has a drama festival and invites a personality of the theatre to open it. In recent years Mr. Anton Dolin, Miss Wendy Toye and Mr. David Kossof have been kind enough to come and to meet and encourage the children who take part. A few boys and girls are always outstanding and this year we decided ten came into this category. Judged on general academic ability they would classify as three very good, two good, two average, two poor and one very poor. The head of the department of music told me last week that his most successful pupil this year, who should aim at examination work and possibly a career in music, is a girl who in most subjects works with the lowest 'sets'. One of two pupils admitted recently to a three-year art college course came to us on a 'central' selection and intended to be a clerk, the other was a pupil of low 'modern' classification whose original aim was to work in a shop. Our boys and girls are developing a fine record in athletics and games. District and London champions are coming from the whole ability range.

These are the four subjects contained in our mixed-ability experiment, drama, music, art and physical education. It is possible after three and a half years to issue an interim report but it must be admitted that in drama and music difficulties outside

THE MIXED-ABILITY EXPERIMENT

our control have affected the plans. Everyone knows of the shortage of teachers; some people know that when schools are employing the total number of staff they are allowed under the 'quota' system agreed by the local authorities and the Ministry of Education, it is possible to receive permission to engage additional teachers in a part-time capacity. Married women, retired men, post-graduate students can often give a few hours a week when they cannot offer their full-time services. Unfortunately such people, invaluable though their help can be, tend to come and go and this lack of continuity is most upsetting to the children. We found it necessary to employ part-time teachers in music and drama. The resulting lack of stability has meant adjustment of groups, work begun and not completed and a sense of insecurity. Permanent staff have more than pulled their weight to keep their carefully-prepared schemes operating, but together with the whole profession they look forward to the day when the nation organizes its teacher-training adequately and all schools have the teachers necessary for the vital task of educating our children.

This is how the mixed-ability experiment works. Children in the first three years have six hours a fortnight for art, drama and music. Approximately two hundred and seventy pupils in a year divide into three units of ninety, all of which consist of some members from each form and are therefore mixed-ability groups. During the six hours allocated on the time-table for these subjects the groups of children rotate through the three departments and so have two hours each fortnight of art, drama and music. Ideally we should like to have four teachers available in each subject so that, at least for part of the time, the children could be in house groups. Where this is possible, as in art, it is done most usefully and successfully, but although it began in the other subjects, the staffing difficulties I have mentioned prevented its continuation and it has been necessary to reform the children, no longer in Houses but in three teaching groups, each, however, still a mixed-ability unit.

All pupils take a basic three-year art-craft course. During the first two years the children move through the four studios, each

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

with its own specialist teacher, and so experience a wide range of self-expression in a diversity of materials. Painting, modelling in chalk and clay, fabric printing, weaving, carving in wood, pottery; three-dimensional work in wood, plastic, card and paper; printing and bookcraft, all these subjects play their part in the development of creative activity and indeed creative thinking. In the third year, a system of partial options operate, some of which are initiated by the pupils, some by the staff and this is intended to encourage specific talents.

This enthusiastic and idealistic department has made many statements on the educational significance of its work since the school opened. Therapeutic in its effect on over-emotional or unstable children; calling for a full partnership of the intellect and intuitive perception it serves adolescence as few other subjects can; answering the needs of the technological age by helping the future scientist or engineer to develop a creative imagination; vital to personality integration—these are typical claims. Perhaps as important were the remarks of the head of department at a recent staff meeting. He said:

The interest to me is in the constant interplay of ideas between the bright and the least bright children. They shock and stimulate each other. They all do well and our graphs, recording the progress of all ability ranges, show that even the least able can cope. The level of attainment remains above that generally accepted in art departments as an average mark. At no point is there any evidence of self-consciousness among the children about their different forms or capabilities. As far as the Certificate of Education is concerned the most able or average children academically are getting through, but so are the less able candidates who stay on for the fifth year course. And we have no discipline problems whatsoever.

The 'Activity and Progress Record' card which is kept for purposes of our research in this department gives a yearly assessment under these headings: painting, pattern, carving, modelling, pottery, inventive design, illustration, lettering, printing, book-making, fabric, weaving, cane, theatre, construction and objective test of aesthetic development.

The head of music makes two statements to me at frequent intervals. One is that in the wise and remarkable ancient civilization of Greece the educational pattern centred round a study of music, and the other that this subject is a language as capable of providing intellectual extension through 'Advanced' level studies as any other language. He is most concerned with seeking and finding the musical talent in the whole school and having found it, ensuring that time is made available to provide a full and intensive course to the highest level. The first sentences of the 'General Introduction' to his syllabus are characteristic:

The first year syllabus is planned to cover all the most fundamental beginnings of music, reading and writing, based on the assumption that the earlier training of new entrants will have been very varied in this matter. It will thus form a revision or a fresh opportunity.

The syllabus also sets out to provide good standards of performance in singing a large repertoire of the better-known songs, training in rhythm and pitch combined with theory so that the child 'should see what he is singing, hear what he is reading and sing what he is writing', musical appreciation, continuing throughout every musical activity and above all the opportunity to *make* music in the widest sense of the term.

As in art the mixed-ability groups in each year in music were originally house groups but the necessity to reduce four teaching units to three broke up this ideal organization. The two-hour periods are allocated one to musicianship and the other to a musical activity. In the first year the musicianship groups reflect true mixed ability and each follows the simple, essential syllabus. The constitution of the groups for the second lesson depends on four factors, the child's preferences, his past musical experience, the result of aural tests and a practical consideration—the need to keep the numbers in the *teaching units* roughly balanced. The three activities are singing, recorder playing and percussion band work and all achieve their objective of involving the children in music making. Boys and girls may change to a new activity, when

it is desirable and the groups are given the opportunity of combining and performing to each other.

In musicianship, however, in the second year the children are regrouped as a result of records and tests indicating their progress. This happens again in the third year, by which time the teaching 'sets' have become more homogeneous as far as musical aptitude is concerned, although judged by the general form organization of the school they still reflect a mixture of ability. While it is true that the majority of children in the top musicianship set are those of higher academic ability, there are many from the middle ranges and some striking exceptions from the least able forms. These children are those likely to progress to a Certificate of Education course.

The records kept in this department are under the following headings: form, musicianship class, activity class; grades, which are assessed on a five-point scale, in attainment, year's work, aural score, vocal score, activities and extra musical activities (such as membership of choir, orchestra, etc.); teacher's remarks and report. They resemble in purpose and in content those of the art department, for from both we shall eventually have the data to trace the degree of correlation between academic ability and these two specific abilities and to assess the success or failure of the experiment of teaching the subjects in mixed-ability groups.

Drama is a department in its own right, but obviously is organized in close co-operation with English. The scheme of work sets out:

To provide an opportunity for the development of imagination and free expression.

To give an incentive to good speech and movement.

To provide an outlet for the emotions and to allow children to think about characters other than their own.

To give opportunities for the development of self-confidence and team work.

The head of department outlines his policy in movement and mime in an introduction to a very detailed syllabus when he says:

It is felt that when freedom is lacking in speech, it can be en-

couraged through movement. Shy, nervous children who are afraid to speak are often considered to be stupid when they are really intelligent and full of feeling. These children can be coaxed out of their timidity by movement and mime work. This work often gives children who are in no way interested in speech the incentive they need. Very soon they will be asking to add words to the movements. This may lead to the making of their own plays and so connect with written work as well as oral English.

The course progresses from instruction in the art of relaxation, through good movement to mime, and children are taught to use the whole body consciously. Finally the boys and girls are encouraged to use their imaginations to devise scenes which express their interpretation through movement of the mood or atmosphere of a piece of music. Two such dance dramas in our annual festivals, *War and Peace* and *Pagan Light*, had each a cast of approaching fifty children who danced and mimed to such effect that it was difficult to decide who was more absorbed, the performers or the audience.

The second section of the syllabus, drama, lays down the principle that the intention is not to produce actors or dancers, but to give opportunity for self-expression and the development of the child's personality. The emphasis now is on the spoken word, and play-reading, drama appreciation and stagecraft are introduced. The syllabus is still experimental, particularly in the fourth, fifth and sixth years.

In this department we have been able to keep four teachers available for each ninety children and so the House again has provided the teaching unit. This section of our mixed-ability experiment is again showing interesting developments. Of first-year children the head of department reports:

Movement and mime lessons are extremely satisfactory. All elements work very well together, and one finds that the less academically-minded children are stimulated and encouraged by the more intelligent children. In fact, during the early stages of the Course, children from the lower ability ranges often take the lead, especially in movement practices.

The picture in the second and third years is a little different.

The same success is achieved in these years with movement and mime, but in speech, in improvisation exercises there is a falling away with the less intelligent children. When engaged in group work they tend to lose their concentration, become less co-operative and their work does not develop as well as the other children's. It is noticeable that they prefer to form groups of their own kind, are very enthusiastic at first but after a short period their interest flags and they become uncontrolled. When they are working within a 'mixed' group with a good leader, they do much better.

As far as speech sessions in the first year are concerned mixed-ability groups are reasonably successful. All children are interested in exercises on articulation and correct breathing. But in the second and third years the current report says:

It becomes increasingly difficult to achieve any real success as far as formal speech training work is concerned. The ability range is so wide; some read extremely well, others very badly. The brighter children often become impatient and are held back by the others. Consequently the fullest benefit to all is not given with this type of grouping.

Against this conclusion some social and psychological advantages of mixed-ability organization are given. Teachers notice the development of attachment and loyalty to the House, unlikely but interesting friendships and associations and children of completely opposite temperaments and abilities teaming up and working in harmony together.

For the purposes of organization physical education is divided into gymnastics and games and athletics. The form unit is the basis for the lesson in the gymnasium. This branch of the subject does not at the present time come within the scope of the mixed ability experiment although there is some pressure from both men and women specialist staff to incorporate it. The head of department, boys, reports:

There is much to recommend mixed ability classes for the

THE MIXED-ABILITY EXPERIMENT

physical education lesson. The lowest streams contain a good proportion of able gymnasts who appear to retain their first year exuberance until a later stage than the higher streams. Their energies are often misdirected and the presence of the more intelligent might be beneficial to both.

Every week, all the pupils in each year go for most of a morning session to the out-county playing fields provided by the Council for games and athletics. A year group of two hundred and seventy will have approximately sixty-eight children, or thirty-four boys and thirty-four girls in each of the four houses, and these house groups become the teaching units. Teams in soccer, rugby, cricket, netball, rounders, hockey form naturally on a mixed-ability basis, while in athletics the most and least able train side by side.

The staff in charge of physical education believe they can achieve the aims they define in their schemes of work through this type of organization. The girls' course is planned:

To bring about the complete and harmonious development of the individual;

To provide an outlet for repressed physical activity due to school life, crowded home life, traffic and all the restrictive conditions of modern life;

To establish standards of personal hygiene and appearance;

To encourage individual effort and to help the development of the child's personality, but at the same time to awaken an awareness of others and to appreciate the interdependence of one person on another;

To develop self-control, self-discipline, concentration and to acquire poise and self-assurance.

The scheme of work for the boys has a two-fold objective:

To teach through physical activity ways in which we may use our leisure to promote good health, make friends and generally lead a happier life;

to assist in the development of the House system and general corporate life of the school.

From the women staff a recent report states:

Children in each house, irrespective of form or ability, travel in coaches together and work and play together. This system we feel works very satisfactorily. No distinction or division appears to be obvious. The most able children academically show no superiority and the least able no inferiority. Many of the more intelligent girls do possess ability in games and show the acute mental alertness and observation so necessary to play well, though these qualities can be seen too among those who are less successful in the classroom but who have the same energy, vitality and physical skills. They share team-work and learn sportsmanship together. The school teams are all examples of mixed-ability organization.

From the head of department, boys, comes a similar statement:

Working in mixed-ability groups at the fields is decidedly beneficial to the lower streams, especially to the physically active. I don't think that the intelligent boy who is also a good games player suffers in any way because of this form of organization. The physically inactive, intelligent or not, are always a problem and a challenge.

The master in charge insists that his biggest difficulty is catering for the overweight boys who seem to come, almost invariably, from the academic forms. The department has produced an interesting analysis of the comparative ability of boys pursuing most keenly the various branches of physical education. Whilst no hard and fast classification is suggested there is a tendency for rugby and athletics to attract the boys of highest and medium ability, soccer to appeal to the middle and lower groups, while boxing claims its maximum supporters from the most and the least able pupils.

The all-round standard of achievement of the girls is good and is developing. Teams are practising hard and doing well in matches and the seniors, last year, won the District Athletics Championship. The boys' record is outstanding. This year in soccer the school has equalled a post-war record in the District Championships by appearing in all trophy finals. The boys also won the senior District Athletics Cup. The standard of boxing in the *Inter-House* bouts was very high and two boys won London

THE MIXED-ABILITY EXPERIMENT

Championship medals and one reached the finals of the National contest. Cross-country running and rugby are progressing well. Most satisfactory of all, one boy in three has represented the school in one sport or another during this year.

Some of the phrases of the two schemes of work, 'standards of appearance', 'self-control and self-discipline', 'poise and assurance', 'promote good health . . . lead a happier life', 'development of the corporate life of the school', come to my mind when I watch each day an average of six coaches each full of well-groomed, fully-uniformed, contented boys and girls, pull out on their journey to the playing fields.

Hanging in my room is an exotic calendar, depicting a glamorous young lady enjoying the sunshine on a tropical beach. Some visitors notice it out of the corners of their eyes, and occasionally a bold one makes a comment. On the back is pasted a letter which arrived in the post with the calendar. It is from the owner of the coaches which carry our pupils and it compliments me on their behaviour which is 'by far the best we have ever experienced'. The coaches are not owned by a Stoke Newington firm; our school is a mixed one. The letter begins 'Dear Sir'.

Is the standard of achievement reached in the subjects organized on a mixed-ability basis satisfactory for all children? Should the experiment be extended to embrace other subjects? These are two questions we are often asked. The answer to the first is yes—with reservations. In art and physical education our approval is unqualified; in music, in order to do justice to children with real talent, from the true mixed-ability groups, others reflecting specific aptitudes must be allowed to develop, and while these still contain children of all abilities, they are no longer based on a cross-section of our pupils. One aspect of our drama work, movement and mime is developing as we hoped; in spoken drama we are conscious of limiting factors. For the time being, therefore, until we have learned more we shall not extend the experiment. Should we decide in the future to bring subjects into this type of organization we shall conduct carefully-controlled courses on a limited scale.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

There is one very important subject, religious education, which in the method of grouping adopted for teaching purposes comes outside the form, 'set' or mixed-ability type of organization. In our school its development presents special difficulties.

The syllabus of religious education should be the source of all spiritual values and the inspiration of moral standards both personal and to the community. It should be more. A study of the Bible can give each child an appreciation of justice, honesty, truth, freedom, understanding, responsibility and service to his fellows, and when the subject is well taught, do more for character training in the right context than all the 'pi-jaws' in the world. But in a school such as ours religion, which can be the great unifying force, could become the great divider for, among our children, are members of almost every religion and when they come to us at eleven years of age they are more aware of their differences, one from another, than of the common factors which unite them. And it must be admitted, we have many parents who wish their sons and daughters to continue to accept and take pride in their 'separateness'.

'The secular solution' of no religious instruction in schools, which has been adopted in the United States and other countries partly because of these difficulties, even if it were considered desirable, is impossible in our State schools in which the Education Act of 1944 makes religious education the only compulsory subject in the curriculum. According to the Act, we must begin each day with an undenominational service of worship attended by all pupils except those whose parents wish them to be withdrawn. Nowhere does the Act specify a *Christian* service, although this is normally taken for granted. Lessons of religious instruction must also be organized, following the 'Agreed Syllabus' drawn up by each local authority, but again children may be exempted at the parents' request. Our London plan outlines courses taken from the Old and New Testaments. We should therefore be complying with the letter of the Act if we held a non-denominational Christian service each day and allowed more than five hundred non-Christian and Catholic children, withdrawn from it, to sit in their

classrooms at this time, and if we made similar arrangements during religious instruction lessons.

We have instead interpreted what we believe to be the spirit of the Education Act, for we hope it was not worded explicitly in this matter of provision for children who do not attend the combined act of worship in order to make it possible for schools to exercise discretion in developing such organization in religious services as answered the needs of the communities they served. This we have done in full consultation with parents and our local churches and synagogues.

On five mornings out of six I take an undenominational Christian service in the main hall and this is attended by about two-thirds of the pupils and staff. Nearly a third of our children opt out of this assembly. Of these approximately four hundred Jewish boys and girls meet in the dining-hall where they worship with teachers of their own faith. This year there are ninety children and five members of staff who are Catholic and they join in prayer in the library. It is common practice for the Hindu and Mohammedan children to choose to join the main assembly, but those who do not wish to do so have separate arrangements made for them, as does the occasional atheist. On one day in six (a different day each week is for many reasons desirable) we have a combined service which is so arranged that all except the most extreme and orthodox join in, but it must be confessed that while it serves an invaluable purpose in bringing the school together as a community and in furthering social and ethical training, we all find, staff, children and myself alike, that as an act of worship it is not completely satisfying. Christian children miss reference to Christ, Jewish children dislike singing the unfamiliar hymns. I select as the central themes of the services the fundamental ideals which bind together the great religions of the world, the fight of good against evil, brotherhood, peace and goodwill or sometimes I choose subjects of local, national or topical significance such as racial toleration, civic responsibility, the refugee problem. Frequently the school motto, *'Fellowship is Life'*, through *one of its many aspects* inspires the call to worship when we remember together that *'Thou shalt love*

the Lord thy God' is followed by *"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"*. But no matter how carefully and with what co-operative effort these services are planned we believe they should not be a daily occurrence and that it is desirable for children to be allowed to worship their God in their own familiar way with those of their own faith on five occasions, while sharing a common religious experience which stresses certain basic unities, on the sixth. This compromise answers the personal spiritual needs of the individual yet helps him to see himself as one who would not 'pass by on the other side'. A secular assembly always follows the 'day six' service and this provides the occasion for matters of general interest to be dealt with in a manner which brings the school together as a community and encourages the development of pride, responsibility and loyalty.

The organization of teaching units so that all children are profitably occupied during time allotted for religious education is made possible by 'setting' across three forms of approximately comparable ability in one year. This gives us two groups of Protestant children, one of Jewish children and an average of ten more who will be Catholics, Mohammedans or Hindus. The first two sets are taught according to the principles of London Syllabus, the third takes secular Hebrew studies and the other children read their own devotional literature, purchased from voluntary funds, in a room provided. In the Sixth form all pupils join in a course of study of comparative religions and of some of the great social and ethical problems of our time.

I have tried to show that the comprehensive school, catering for all the children of a multi-religious neighbourhood, has a very difficult task to perform if it takes religious education seriously and yet tries to conform to the regulations which forbid denominational teaching. We have no denominational teaching in lesson time, but we cannot in conscience claim that there is no learning during our Jewish and Catholic services. It is necessary to stress the fact that there is complete freedom in this matter. No child at Woodberry Down has to worship in any other way than that which he and his parents choose. But to refuse religious experience

point in foreign student enrollment. Some institutions have an explicit 10 percent quota for foreign students. Others have a tacit quota policy. Some state-supported institutions feel that even the discussion of a quota might arouse certain elements in state legislatures to oppose the spending of any state funds for the education of foreigners. Given the great heterogeneity of American educational institutions, it is clear that no generalization is possible on what constitutes saturation and wise policies toward it. However, for the country as a whole and in purely quantitative terms, the number of foreign students in the United States cannot be considered at a saturation point with the possible exception of certain technical or professional schools, such as those in medicine. This appears to be true, particularly in view of the services generally accorded our own students and of additional services we feel called upon to give students from abroad. It is possible, however, that from the point of view of high quality (for example, good placement, work appropriate to the student, and so forth), the capacity to absorb more foreign students is not so great as our large and diffuse educational resources might at first imply.

For any particular institution, a saturation point is a function of its educational philosophy in general, of its counseling policies in particular, of the demands made by external agencies—such as the Department of State and its agents, like the Institute of International Education—of its financial resources, of its size and location, of the level of its teaching, and of a dozen other factors particular to each institution. Every institution would have to scrutinize its own situation with objectivity and integrity to reach any judicious conclusions on this score. It would have to consider the needs of foreign students as seriously as it considers its own self-interests. The mere willingness to accept foreign students does not necessarily assure an institution's capacity to handle them competently.



9. Twins of different ability levels working together in Pottery Mixed-Ability Group



10. Drama Mixed-Ability Group in the Assembly Hall



9 Twins of different ability levels working together in Pottery Mixed-Ability Group



10. Drama Mixed-Ability Group in the Assembly Hall



9. Twins of different ability levels working together in Pottery Mixed-Ability Group

THE MIXED-ABILITY EXPERIMENT

during school life to more than one third of our children who cannot join in our combined act of worship would surely be a denial of equal educational opportunity, for this would mean that only for the majority could we ensure that together with training of the mind proceeds the training of the spirit and character and in depriving the minority we should be betraying the comprehensive ideal.

In these last two chapters I have attempted to outline the various methods of organization we have adopted to teach the subjects in our curriculum according to the principles of the comprehensive system of education. It is most unlikely that the present plan will be our final one. Like all pioneers we shall learn by trial and error. We shall remember too that the curriculum and schemes of work must change as the needs of our children alter and develop. Ultimately it is not what is taught that matters, nor how it is taught but what is happening to the child who is at the receiving end of all this carefully selected and presented subject-matter. Philosophies are vital; principles inspire us; believing in the incalculable importance of our work we could say with Aristotle, 'All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depend on the education of youth.' But often, in the midst of our planning, we shall stop and look at our pupils. And we shall make sure we look at them through the right end of the telescope!



... Making Guitars



12. Learning to play the Guitar—Club Activity

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11. Making Guitars



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THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

reputation, standing apprehensively outside the senior house master's room, while through the partly open door a wrathful voice remonstrated with the fourth member of their partnership on his persistent misdemeanours. 'We have tried in every way to help you,' it protested. 'You won't take our advice, nor will you listen to your parents! Everyone is losing patience. There's only one solution now!'

A loud report broke the silence and the room went dark.

'No, sir, not that! Don't shoot again,' shouted the boy inside the room and his unnerved companions bolted for their lives down the corridor.

The senior house master had been holding a confiscated realistically-made water-pistol when his electric light bulb exploded!

On another occasion the same house master, following visits from the vicar and some members of the general public who were complaining of the bad behaviour on the estate of the smallest but possibly the most villainous pupil in the school, sent for the innocent looking, gentle-voiced boy and suggested that he was no credit to Woodberry Down. The child gravely admitted his many anti-social actions, then solemnly pleaded, 'Punish me in any way, sir, keep me in, cane me, but please don't export me.'

I had last term a very plausible young fourteen-year-old Irishman referred to me by his house master. He had been playing off school against parents until his mother and father saw us as sadistic persecutors and we saw them as qualifying for the attention of the N.S.P.C.C. He sat and faced me comfortably until bit by bit his little scheme was unravelled. Then he stood up dramatically and said, 'Madam, you have caught me. You have put a noose round my neck. I can feel it tightening. But don't pull the rope, I beg you. Have mercy and I will never behave like this again.' I understand from his house master that now school and home are working in co-operation the boy is much more settled in his attitude to both, but I can never see him about the school without smiling and the grin I get in return shows that he shares the joke of the noose that has not tightened.

The House System gives the Personal Touch

THE HOUSE SYSTEM can mean a very great deal in a school, or it can mean very little indeed. In the day-school it has tended to be a weak, artificial imitation of the real purposeful organization of the public school and is often allowed to degenerate into a convenient channel through which to collect conduct marks or to stimulate enthusiasm for competitions on sports day. At a recent visit of one of Her Majesty's inspectors we were told that our system, although that of a day-school, was fundamentally similar in purpose, design and content to that of the public boarding schools where the usefulness of its function has never been denied. This we were happy to hear, believing as we do, that no school which does not make adequate provision for every child to be known intimately as an individual and guided as such through his adolescent years is likely to provide a completely satisfactory education, no matter how excellent the equipment and other material advantages provided.

Yet when I look back on the progress of our houses in these three and a half years it is some of the more humorous incidents which I recall first. There was the story of a shooting incident which rocked the school with amusement. One December afternoon, at the end of lessons, I saw three senior boys, not of unblemished

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

The over-all organization of the school is such that children in each house have plenty of opportunities to get together. I have already explained how in some subjects in the mixed-ability groups experiment where we have four teachers available, the teaching unit is a house group and this is an ideal arrangement. Because all games are taught in houses much of the out-of-school physical education is naturally along these lines, although of course the constitution of school teams cuts across the house organization.

Our children dine in their houses and any boys and girls not school prefects but showing qualities of leadership are selected as table monitors. These are often pupils who will be leaving school at fifteen years of age. They are given a list of instructions which tells them:

How well you serve your house will depend a very great deal on your own personalities and your powers of leadership. If you feel, after you have read this, that you are unable to produce any enthusiasm for the idea, please say so since nothing is so deadening to a house spirit as a supposed leader who works with a 'couldn't care less' attitude. This attitude will ruin a good house and cancel out much of the work that other people are doing in it, so 'No half-heartedness, please!'

The monitors are responsible for marking dinner registers, checking with form teachers on absentees, seeing there is no waste of food and that tables are cleared at the end of the meal and for setting and insisting on a standard of good manners which is defined by the house staff for their prefects in this manner:

The standard that we aim for in school dinners is the same that you would expect to find in a well-run home. The child who fights for salt, persists in playing with the cutlery or otherwise displays bad manners, should be discouraged very firmly and then, only if necessary, reported to one of us. Do be very particular to see that when you wield power you do so justly. Do make sure that *all* the children (even your best friend) take their turn at doing the necessary jobs. Boys and girls will respect you for being firm with them and you will gain a sense of achievement out of having done a job

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

During the first term in 1955 the children chose the names of their four houses. Many suggestions were put forward by pupils and staff but eventually it was decided to draw up in history lessons a list of men and women who by their lives and work gave us examples of our school motto, 'Fellowship is Life', and after a campaign, to have an election of four candidates. From seventeen international figures Robert Falcon Scott, Albert Einstein, Marie Curie, and Helen Keller were selected and they now give their names to our four houses. Each child coming into the school is given a printed account of the life and example of his house name-sake and a signed letter from his house master or house mistress which says, taking John Brown of Keller as an example:

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM.

WOODBERRY DOWN SCHOOL.

Dear John,

You are now a member of Keller House. This means that during your school life your house mistress will be Miss Pattison and your deputy house master will be Mr. Deighton.

We are all proud of our house and expect all its members to live up to the high standards of work, conduct, appearance and sportsmanship the school expects. From time to time we all meet together but whenever you have problems, whether they concern the school or your life outside school, you can always come along to us and have a chat about them.

Welcome to Keller House.

May you bring credit to it.

Early in the first year evening At Homes to parents and children are held by each house. Over coffee the function of the system of personal contact and individual attention is explained and parents are invited to co-operate fully with the staff by keeping them aware of all matters relevant to their child's welfare. They are reminded that the school is large in order that through specialist staffing and equipment their children can receive the advantages of a full and wide education, but that we break it down into small, more intimate groups called houses so that pupils can really get to know and be known by sympathetic and understanding teachers whose especial care they are.

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

lounge suit sets an example of complete propriety and sartorial distinction. A typical visitor who is always welcomed is our local curate, who dances with the children the best 'cha-cha' in the neighbourhood.

During these two hours parents are invited to come in to see house masters and house mistresses and for families where both mother and father are at work and daytime interviews present difficulties, the 'evening recreational' provides the convenient occasion to talk over problems or discuss progress.

All equipment provided for the club centre is paid for from our own school fund and of course the work is done voluntarily by the house staff and other teachers who see these informal evenings as a valuable extension of their daytime duties of getting to know and understand their children and of providing opportunities for boys and girls of all abilities and attitudes to share interests and leisure time activities.

The main occasions then when children in a house meet together are in some of those lessons which are based on mixed-ability groups, during dining time, at religious services and non-religious assemblies and in the evening recreational clubs. At least, and probably more important, however, is the development of the personal relationship between house master or house mistress and child. During the first two years pupils are guided by the deputy house master or deputy house mistress who arranges a private talk with each individual during the early weeks of his school life, and sees him frequently on many other occasions. As the senior assistant mistress has the over-all supervision of first and second year children, the house staff refer any matter of particular difficulty to her. From the third year onwards the heads of houses, who will have attended junior functions so that they are known well, although not intimately, by their younger children, take over this responsibility and they in their turn arrange interviews with each child. Following some of these talks pupils are asked to help the house help them by taking home and filling in a questionnaire covering the matters they have just discussed so that a complete picture of their background, growing interests and abilities,

well. If it should come to your notice, as can happen in casual conversation, that any children might be in trouble of any sort please let us know.

House staff are present in the dining hall and the occasions provide the odd moment for a word of encouragement or advice where it is needed.

Each house has a morning service, followed by a secular meeting, once a month. For this purpose children have leave from their normal assemblies. The house service follows the pattern of our 'day six' assembly and can therefore be attended by all children. It is taken by the house master or house mistress aided by house captains, games captains and other officers and is attended also by other teachers for all members of staff belonging to a house. This occasion provides the opportunity for direct moral instruction, and announcements on disciplinary matters, but again, like the full assembly, the emphasis is on praise for what is being achieved and encouragement to further effort in the task of building a good house spirit and tradition.

The occasion for complete informality is the weekly 'recreational evening' provided by the house staff for their senior members, pupils in the third year and above. Each house meets between half past five and half past seven on one evening from Monday to Thursday—Friday is excluded from most out-of-school activities as Jewish children need to be home early preparing for the Sabbath during much of the year and we keep to a minimum any organization which separates boys and girls through religion or race. Our large dining hall becomes the club centre and a variety of activities such as dancing, table-tennis, chess, card games, and darts are provided. There is a television corner and a canteen. Informal clothes are worn and the bright sweaters and jeans, beloved by our pupils, are much in evidence. Make-up is allowed. Not only house staff but other teachers come when they can and share in the friendly atmosphere. I have to look hard to recognize in the exotic jiving teenager of the evening, the sedate studious fifth former of the day and at the plimsolled, jacketless, tieless table-tennis enthusiast who in other places in his dark

a reference to the existence of such information which does not appear in the general file and is not available to anyone other than the house master or myself. Children are made aware of this procedure when the need arises for them to be told.

These then are the regular occasions for communication between a house master and his children. There are some boys and girls, however, who find themselves in the house room perhaps twenty times in the course of a year. For poor work, lack of effort, inattention to homework, slovenly appearance, disobedience or discourtesy, unpunctuality or any of the other sins of commission or omission, pupils are instructed to report to their house master. If friendly advice, followed by work or conduct report forms which last a fortnight and need a satisfactory comment at the end of each lesson by the teacher and father or mother's signature at the end of each day both fail to produce an improvement, further steps are taken in consultation with parents and occasionally even corporal punishment is administered to boys by the senior house master or deputy headmaster. Caning, which most of us here dislike intensely as an admission of failure, is a rare occurrence and, I hope, as the school progresses will disappear altogether.

Other children find themselves as frequently reporting to their house masters for praiseworthy conduct or exceptionally good work and a record of such successful effort is kept in the files. Constant consultation with the deputy headmaster, who is responsible for academic records, keeps the house staff aware of each child's progress through the varied courses of the comprehensive school.

A third group of boys and girls who wait at 4.15 p.m. at the house surgery or waylay their house masters at odd moments during the day are those who have been sent by teachers to ask for advice, or others who are aware they need help. It may be a simple matter of 'The maths in my set are too hard. Please can you arrange for me to be moved?' 'May I stay at school and join the homework class because it's too noisy in the flats to concentrate?' 'We have another baby. Can I come in late because I have to do the shopping?' or 'May I have some books to read up on how I can become a nursery nurse?' But sometimes far deeper problems have

difficulties at school, at home or of a personal nature can be kept as a record and used for their guidance when careers are discussed or employment time comes round. If there is likely to be any question which may prove embarrassing to a boy or girl the house staff deal with the matter tactfully and are very careful to make sure that no impression that they are prying or obtaining information for any purpose other than their own welfare is left with the children. Pupils and parents are completely co-operative and appreciative of the motives which prompt our interest.

As can be seen the first and second year questionnaire shows how the child is settling in at school and what use is being made of the opportunities available for work and play. At the end of the third year the vocational guidance form gives us an indication or personal preference which may or may not tally with the advice we shall give at the careers convention, but it does give the house master a lead in redirecting a child who may be striving after the unattainable. The answers to the questions posed in the fourth year enable the house master to check the success or otherwise of the choice of specialist studies. By the time the pupil reaches the end of his fifth year course many members of staff will know him sufficiently well to assess his suitability for sixth form studies, but the questionnaire drawn up at this stage helps the boy to clarify his mind on many points and to see his future in perspective against the requirements of external bodies, his own achievements and the limitations or demands of his home background.

An 'Aptitude and Attitude Record' which is kept by the house-master but filled in each year by the form teacher gives an independent view of the child's educational and social behaviour pattern. The back of this card is used for notes of any careers advice which has been given.

Returned questionnaires, record cards and any other relevant information from teachers or home is kept in the child's own house file and is available to members of the staff needing to know more of a pupil or to the parents. Index cards showing a brief résumé of useful facts about each pupil are used to simplify the filing system. When any confidential matters have been dealt with, a note gives

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

'Where will it end?' asked an anxious mother. 'We'll keep him on at school. I don't mind going on at work. But he's so funny now. He wants a clean shirt and clean socks every day! And he's costing us a fortune in hot baths—has one every night!'

Another mother came to demand that his house master instruct her seventeen-year-old son not to hitch-hike across Europe. 'He's gone mad!' she insisted. 'He talks of getting to know his fellow men and standing on his own feet. Other boys from this school are going, he says. I don't know what they're coming to!'

Fathers come more often than not to discuss their daughters. After a long talk with her house mistress a fifth former, last year, decided to be an infants' school teacher.

'She could earn eight pounds a week now working for a friend of mine,' said a very strong-minded, forceful gentleman, 'but she talks of loving children and serving the community. That's idealism. I've told her we can't afford idealism.' His wife nodded agreement.

'She's a lovely typist,' she said. 'Secretaries earn more than school teachers, don't they?'

It wasn't a question. She knew her facts.

'You'll be a good sensible girl and go in business, won't you?' father asked his daughter.

She is very gentle, very sweet.

'I'd rather not, please,' she said. 'I don't care about money. I want to be happy with little children.'

She has won her battle to date. One day I hope little children will be very happy with her.

I am convinced there is no group of school teachers anywhere in this country working harder and achieving more than my senior house master and his three other heads of houses. In addition to their duties in this capacity they have their class-teaching which occupies the greater part of each day. The scope and purpose of their work may be judged from a quotation from their last year's diary, drawn up by the senior housemaster. Term began on 9 September.

arisen. Children have said all these things. 'Dad is out of work and my school uniform has become very shabby.' 'Mum is going in hospital and I have no one to look after me.' 'My parents are parting—and they don't want me.' 'I stole a bottle of lemonade in the holidays and I'm frightened to go into the court.' 'The people downstairs have moved and the landlord has let the rooms to a garment firm. The machines are on till late in the evening and Saturdays and Sundays too. I can't do any homework and mum is getting ill. She says will you write to the housing people?' 'My stepmother has locked me out. I have slept in a Scout hut for four nights. What shall I do?' In these serious cases, parents are contacted at once. During the course of their duties house staff need to consult, either at their offices or on the school premises, many people such as welfare workers, probation officers, psychologists and psychiatrists, ministers of religion, church authorities, the Jewish Board of Guardians and the police. Often the responsibility for action can be passed over to our Care Committee, the members of which through home visits can do much to relieve conditions of hardship and distress, but the duty of consoling the child, the task of keeping his confidence and guarding his self-respect, that belongs to the housemaster and cannot be delegated. I am sure that the fact that we have so very few delinquents and children on probation in our school is due to the constant care and firm but kindly supervision of my house staff, who I know from the many letters of appreciation I receive regularly from parents, have the trust, respect and affection of their children. And, of course, the result of the house master's efforts is seen when children work again to capacity or continue the education which otherwise might have been terminated.

Parents, as well as pupils, find the new order changes old conceptions. Suddenly, they tell us, the boy or girl who was going to be a clerk or cashier, talks of college or university or art courses or a student apprenticeship. Instead of going to the pictures they queue up at Sadler's Wells or join school groups going to a theatre in the West End. Even personal habits are affected!

I was called in by a house master to one such difficult interview.

Such occasions are Sports Day, when the whole school goes to Finsbury Park; the inter-house competitions in football and net-ball; boxing tournaments; the finals of the cross-country race, which is run along North London roads, down and through and up the subways, by permission of London Transport, round the park and back to finish in Woodberry Grove to the delight of the population which turns out to exhort Curie to make a spurt for it or Einstein to have a go. We have found that collections for charities and accumulation of jumble for the annual sale proceed faster when the appeal to the child's moral and social sense is supplemented by the announcement of a house competition and here the very least able children come into their own. It is from the lowest ability ranges that the collectors of hundredweights of silver paper, dozens of garments or 'white elephants' come. And how the children expand when they hear their names read out in full assembly as having made a full contribution to the success of their house!

These pleasant manifestations, stimulating though they are to our pupils, show the outward signs, the less important aspect of our house system. The personal relationship between house master and child based on knowledge, understanding and trust is the inner grace. Many visitors who come in and see only the bare bones of the organization—the record files—comment: 'I don't like record cards. Isn't it better in the small school where the headmaster knows every child and doesn't have to write anything down?'

Is it? I honestly don't think so.

In small schools in country districts, or close knit communities, the head teacher's knowledge of his pupils is often by virtue of his life in the neighbourhood and not through his professional office. In towns, where more often than not pupils are drawn from a wide area, this knowledge can only come to the head, as it comes to my house masters, through direct contact and deep personal interest. I doubt whether in any school of more than four or five hundred there are many headmasters or headmistresses who can, with hand on heart, claim to know as individuals, all their children. By keeping

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
HOUSE DIARY. AUTUMN TERM 1958

| Month | Week | |
|-------|------|---|
| Sept. | 1 | Amend all index cards; attention to new forms and sets. |
| " | 2 | Draw up new House lists. |
| " | 3 | Interview 15+ leavers. Draw Confidential reports for Youth Employment officer. |
| " | 4 | Interview 6th Formers and check courses. University and college entrants etc. to Deputy/Headmaster. |
| Oct. | 1 } | Interview 5th and 4th formers, check courses. |
| " | 2 } | |
| " | 3 | |
| " | 4 } | |
| Nov. | 1 } | Deal with Prize Day arrangements. |
| " | 2 } | Begin 3rd yr. Careers Convention Interviews. |
| " | 1 } | Explain system. Give out careers literature. |
| " | 2 | Collect in 5 yr. Questionnaires. Deal with difficulties. |
| " | 3 | Talks with 3rd years—Careers. |
| " | 4 | Be present at 15+ interviews with Youth Employment officer and parents. |
| Dec. | 1 } | Conduct analysis 3rd yr. boys vocational guidance returns. |
| " | 2 } | |
| " | 3 | Discuss special cases with Heads of Departments. |
| " | 3 | Send draft testimonials for leavers to the Headmistress. |

Routine

Interviews in Houserooms 9 a.m. 4.15 p.m.

Supervise dinner duties.

See all late children.

Deal with uniform deficiencies.

Sign conduct and work reports. Refer special cases to the Headmistress.

House recreational evenings.

The very nature of our school makes undue competitiveness undesirable, but there are times when we consider the opportunity to shout for the house does no harm and probably does some good.

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM

FIRST AND SECOND YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE

Date..... Form..... Name.....
Home Telephone No..... Work Tel.: Father.....
Mother.....

1. Have there been any major changes at home in the past year? (e.g. births, marriages, deaths, removals, etc.)
2. Have you had any operation, time in hospital, long illness or accident in the last year?
- Have you had to attend regularly at hospital, clinic or dentist?
3. Which subjects do you like most?
- Which subjects do you like least?
4. How often have you been in official homework detention?
- For which subjects?
5. How often have you been detained by teachers after school for poor work?
- For which subjects?
6. How many times have you been sent to the house room for good work?
- For which subjects?
7. How many times have you been on Conduct Report?
- For what reasons?
8. How many times have you been on WORK Report?
9. *Dimers*: I have school lunches/bring sandwiches/go to O.S.E /go home.
10. *Assemblies*: I attend main Christian/Catholic/Jewish assembly.
11. If you are reasonably sure what you want to do for a living, give details here;
12. *Teams*: (State house or school)
13. *Clubs*: in school
- out of school:
14. *Interests*:
15. *School activities*: (school journeys, drama, music festivals, etc.)
- Have you ever contributed an article to the school newspaper?
16. *School responsibilities*: (Form captains, monitors, etc.)
17. Do you do any voluntary work outside school?
- Do you help with any special efforts in school? (Flag days, etc)

DO NOT FORGET that your house master and mistress are always available to discuss any matters on which you need advice or help.

Write overleaf the things you like most about your school and the things you like least, and any suggestions for clubs and activities in which you are interested but which are not catered for.

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM

VOCATIONAL INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Thirteen Plus Days

Name..... Form..... House.....

Instructions: (a) Underline the job, in each group, which appeals to you most.
(b) Work quickly. Do not consider the wage you might get or the length of training required.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|------------|
| Photographer | Policeman | EXAMPLES | Farmer | Milkman |
| Historian or | Biologist | Bus Conductor | Engineer | Hardresser |
| Museum Assistant | | Banker | | |

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

records on paper and not in our heads, the method suggested as a better alternative, we place our knowledge based on personal contact at the disposal of all other interested colleagues who wish to share our understanding of each child. In this way we can get the best of both worlds, the advantage of the greater educational opportunities of the large organization, and the undoubted benefit which comes to each child who is personally guided throughout his school life.

Two years ago a senior pupil, out at night with undersirable companions and dressed in the popular 'tough guy' outfit, was involved in a shooting accident and when he appeared before the magistrate next morning was reprimanded as a typical Teddy Boy. Following a week's remand he came up in court in school uniform, wearing his prefect and house badges and supported by his house master who was invited by the same magistrate to comment. When the whole picture of the boy's character and background was given the court's attitude changed considerably and the school was complimented on the intimate knowledge of the boy which had been presented. 'Such a large school too!' commented a welfare worker.

Last week, as I was about to leave the school I saw an old scholar, an eighteen-year-old boy from the Gold Coast who had been sent to England to be educated and had spent two years with us before going on to a business college. He looked very unhappy and strained. I asked him what was the matter.

'My father died a few months ago,' he said, 'and my mother has to go from the village into the town many miles away to send my money to me. I haven't received any for two months and I haven't paid my keep at the hostel for three weeks. I have sold my overcoat. I haven't anything else to sell. So I have come up to my house master. He will know what is best because he understands my position.'

The boy's confidence was justified. He got all the help he needed. I wonder what Joseph will say in future years if it is suggested to him that the comprehensive school is a cold, vast, impersonal organization where wide educational opportunity is provided at the expense of personal individual treatment!

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM

FOURTH YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE

House..... Date..... Form..... Name.....
 Home Telephone No..... Work Tel. No. Father.....
 Mother.....

Career

1. Are you happy in the course you have chosen?
- If not, why not?
2. Which are the subjects you like best?
3. Which do you like least?
4. How often have you been in official H/W detention?
- For which subjects?
5. How often have you been detained by teachers after school for poor work?
- For which subjects?
- For which teachers?
6. How many times have you been on Conduct Report?
- For what reasons?
7. How many times have you been sent to the house room for good work?
- For which subjects?
8. What position are you in the form?
 Last year This year
9. What sort of job do you want when you leave?
10. Do you know anybody already doing that sort of work?
11. Have you any connexion with any person or organization who could get you into the sort of firm you want?
12. Have you any particular firm in mind?
13. Do you intend to do further study after you have started work?
14. Do you need an employer who will allow you a day off every week in order that you may study
15. What particular examinations have you in mind for the future?
16. Would you be prepared to live away from home, perhaps in a hostel, in order to obtain an apprenticeship?
17. Are there any problems at home which might make it difficult for you to achieve your ambition?

Personal

- Home:* Have there been any major changes at home in the past year (births, marriages, deaths, removals, etc.)?
- Health:* Have you had any operation, time in hospital, long illness or accident in the past year?
- Have you had to attend regularly at hospital, clinic, dentist, etc?
- Work:* Are you doing a part-time job outside school? Give full particulars including days, times and wages
- Teams:* (State House or School)
- Clubs:* In school
- Out of school
- Interests:*
- School activities* (School journeys, drama, music festivals, etc.)

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Book-keeper | Solicitor or Lawyer | Chemist | Dress Cutter | Motor Mechanic |
| Dentist or Optician | Insurance or Travel Agent | Librarian | Electrician | Policeman |
| Author or Journalist | Geologist | Company Secretary | Jeweller | T.V. Mechanic |
| Salesman | Interpreter | Doctor | Draughtsman | Photographer |
| Teacher of Maths or Science | Clerk | Civil Servant | Merchant Seaman | Carpenter or Cabinet Maker |
| Commercial Artist | Meteorologist | Auctioneer or Estate Agent | Painter or Decorator | Chef |
| Accountant | English or Language Teacher | Surveyor or Architect | Shop Assistant | Printer |
| Veterinary Surgeon | Commercial Traveller | Publisher | Radio Operator | Window Dresser |
| Actor or Musician | Atomic Research | Buyer | Farmer | Instrument Maker |

Write here a brief account of the career you would like to follow.
Give reasons for your choice.
It need not be one from the above list.

Do not write below this line

Type of Course indicated: Arts/Science/Commercial/Technical/Practical

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM VOCATIONAL INTEREST QUESTIONNAIRE

Thirteen Plus Girls

Name Form House.....

Instructions, (a) Underline the job, in each group, which appeals to you.
(b) Work quickly. Do not consider the wage you might get or the length of training required

| EXAMPLES | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Photographer | Policewoman | Bus Conductor | Kennel Maid | Actress |
| Author | Doctor or Veterinary Surgeon | Shorthand Typist | Dress Designer | Hairstylist |
| Telephonist | Librarian | Hospital Nurse | Florist | Sewing Machine Demonstrator |
| Laboratory Assistant | Banking or Insurance | Historian or Museum Assistant | Dress Cutter | Shop Assistant |
| Interpreter | Health Visitor | Secretary | Window Dresser | Court Dressmaker |
| Clerk-Typist | English or Language Teacher | Teacher of Science or Domestic Science | Embroidress | Drawing Office Tracer |
| Chemist | Receptionist | Civil Servant | Actress or Singer | Clothing Mechanic |
| Welfare Worker | Radiographer or Physiotherapist | Journalist | Dressmaker | Children's Nurse |
| Copy-Typist | Travel Agent | Dispenser | Factory Worker | Needlework Teacher |

Write here a brief account of the career you would like to follow.
It need not be one from the above list.
Give reasons for your choice.

Do not write below this line

Type of Course indicated: Arts/Science/Commercial/Needlework/General

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

What teams have you played for during your school life? (Give year, sport, school or house; like this: 2nd Rugger H/S)

On a separate sheet, write an essay on 'My Career'.
What school clubs or activities have you supported in the past two years?....

Have you been in a school play?.....
(Give title and part)

Have you been in the school choir?

Do you play a musical instrument?

(Give details)

Have you helped the school in any way? (Catering, Griffin, voluntary collections)

Give details of school outings you have made whilst in this school. (Give year, place and name of teacher in charge) ...

Give details of school journeys (arranged as above) ..

Have you travelled abroad (other than above)? ..

Do you speak any foreign language?

Do you have any particular form of recreation at weekends and in holiday time?

Any other item of interest (Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Scouts, clubs, sports, etc.)

Have you ever performed any action which marks you as a person of initiative, independence, originality, tenacity, perseverance, bravery or any other similar virtue? (Give details) ..

Do you consider yourself as a person with leadership ability? ..

What positions of responsibility have you held whilst you have been in the school?

(Give year, job, and whether school, house or form; e.g.: fourth, Table

Monitor (H) ..

In the last two years

Since beginning.....

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM

SIXTH FORM

Name Form

DATE OF G.C.E. AND EXAMINING BODY

Subjects Passed and Marks (if known):

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| 1. .... | ..... |
| 2. .... | ..... |
| 3. .... | ..... |
| 4. .... | ..... |
| 5. .... | ..... |

Subjects Failed and Marks

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| 1. .... | ..... |
| 2. .... | ..... |
| 3. .... | ..... |

Has this result altered your plans?

Which 'Ordinary' level subjects do you intend to take?

Next January

Next July

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

School responsibilities: (Prefects, team captains, head or deputy of table, etc.)

Do you take part in any regular voluntary work outside school?

Do you assist with collections in school? (Flag days, Griffin, etc.)

Dinners: I have school lunches/bring sandwiches/go to O.S.E. canteen/go home.

Do use some of your time during holidays to travel about town and find out what you can about the prospects of remunerative employment. The more you know, the less the chances of your getting into a job where you might be unhappy.

Your house masters and house mistresses are always available to assist you with advice. Please come along any time that you need assistance of any sort.

Write here the things you like most about your school and the things you like least and any suggestions for clubs or activities in which you are interested but which are not catered for.

FROM THE HOUSE ROOM

FIFTH YEAR QUESTIONNAIRE

Date of Birth Form Name

Which two-year course have you done?

Which do you consider your two best subjects?

Which do you consider your weakest subjects?

Which are average?

(The last three questions should cover every subject you have studied AT ANY TIME during the fifth year, including those you may have dropped for G.C.E.)

Will you enter sixth form?

Until you get required subjects at 'Ordinary' level

For one year

For two years or longer

Have you attended Evening Classes? (Give details)

Have you ever had any paid employment? (Give details)

What job do you want?

Do you know anybody doing it?

Have you any particular firm in mind?

Have you a 'contact' who can help you to get in?

What steps have you taken yourself about finding a suitable position?

What further examinations will you take when you leave?

Would you live away from home in order to get an apprenticeship?

Are there any problems at home which may make it difficult for you to achieve your ambition?

Are you at present in receipt of any grant?

How often have you been late since September?

Have you been absent for more than five days during the fifth year? (Either separately or together)

At any time in your life have you had an operation?

(Give details and age) a severe illness?

Have you any physical disability now?

Is there any type of work you feel you should not do?

What height are you? Are you right- or left-handed?

THE HOUSE SYSTEM GIVES THE PERSONAL TOUCH

| <i>Behaviour Description</i> | <i>Entry with Date—Teacher's Initials with Tick</i> | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1st Yr. | 2nd Yr. | 3rd Yr. | 4th Yr. | 5th Yr. | 6th Yr. |
| <i>Co-operation</i> Does he/she co-operate with groups of children?... Does he/she co-operate with staff as a whole? | | | | | | |
| <i>Uniform and General Grooming</i> Always wears uniform.... Usually wears uniform.... Has to be persuaded to keep to uniform Difficulties in affording uniform | | | | | | |
| <i>Need for Correction</i> Correction never needed . Sometimes needed Constant correction necessary | | | | | | |
| <i>Response to Correction</i> Correction effective.. . Temporarily effective. Resents correction | | | | | | |
| <i>Parents' Attitude</i> Helpful and co-operative Indifferent..... Apathetic Antagonistic | | | | | | |

REMARKS, IF ANY

.....

.....

.....

.....

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Which 'Advanced' level subjects do you intend to take in two years' time? ..

1.
2.
3.

If you now have a clear idea of your future, state what you intend to do immediately you leave school and also give an indication of your long-term plans.

Form Name House.....

APTITUDE AND ATTITUDE RECORD

| Behaviour Description | Entry with date—Teacher's Initials with Tick | | | | | |
|---|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1st Yr. | 2nd Yr. | 3rd Yr. | 4th Yr. | 5th Yr. | 6th Yr. |
| <i>Dependability</i> | | | | | | |
| Usually works beyond what is required | | | | | | |
| Does what he/she is told to do but no more | | | | | | |
| Will do minimum if he/she is prodded | | | | | | |
| Will not do minimum even when he/she is prodded .. | | | | | | |
| <i>Acceptability</i> | | | | | | |
| Is fully accepted by the group | | | | | | |
| Is rejected by members of the group | | | | | | |
| Is ignored by other students | | | | | | |
| He chooses to withdraw from others | | | | | | |
| <i>Leadership</i> | | | | | | |
| Is usually a leader of groups | | | | | | |
| Is a leader when his/her special skills are required .. | | | | | | |
| Drifts along with the group. | | | | | | |
| Never a leader | | | | | | |
| <i>General Habits</i> | | | | | | |
| Usually apathetic and indifferent | | | | | | |
| Marked excitability | | | | | | |
| Unusual extremes of apathy and excitability | | | | | | |
| Marked feelings of inferiority | | | | | | |
| Extreme disregard for property of others | | | | | | |

out of step with the majority of authoritative opinion in this matter which tends to favour the end of the fourth year as the time when children are ready to begin thinking about careers. We consider that in our type of school in our district this is too late, although we admit the possibility of it suiting admirably the different circumstances of the grammar school where all children admitted expect to stay on at least until the end of the fifth year and where the nature of the courses normally allows only a limited degree of selection.

There are four main reasons for this decision. In our neighbourhood it has been traditional for a very high proportion of children to leave school at statutory age, not only from the modern schools, where it is to be expected, but from the central, technical and grammar schools in spite of the fact that to gain admission for their children at these types of secondary schools, parents would have signed contracts promising that at least a five-year course of education would be completed. The widespread habit of sweeping aside this moral obligation to suit personal convenience must of course be condemned. It not only sends youngsters out into the world on the wrong foot, taught the lesson of bad faith and irresponsibility by their own parents but it has a very demoralizing effect on the schools, particularly the staff, who come to believe their efforts are not appreciated and indeed, although they support the new order, tend to remember that when the secondary education of the pre-1944 Act was paid for by the parents, it was valued.

It is, however, important to see the situation from the parents' point of view and this brings us to the second reason for the timing of our convention. The vast majority of the mothers and fathers of our pupils left school at fourteen years of age and have not since had the opportunity to pursue their education. While many of them are ready to do their best to give their children 'a chance in life' they have to be convinced that what happens during the additional time spent at school after the age of fifteen years is really worth the sacrifices that often have to be made. And we regard it as our duty to understand their problem and help them solve it. To these men and women who spent their school lives in

The Careers Convention

THE CAREERS CONVENTION is one of the most important events in our calendar. It takes place in May of each year and is for the benefit of all children approaching the end of their three years' diagnostic course. On the decisions made at its conclusion each child's future depends and that is why we all get together, teachers, pupils and parents, for frank and honest discussions at which we pool our knowledge, state our intentions and formulate a policy which has then the full sanction and support of all concerned.

The name Careers Convention has been chosen deliberately for this occasion although we realize that it may be misleading until an explanation has been given, for we are more concerned with defining a direction or establishing a bias than in persuading fourteen-year-olds to decide their future occupations. But because we are convinced that young people today need to know the exact routes to the achievement of their ambitions in order to keep a steady sense of purpose, we show them in the year preceding the one in which they become fifteen years of age and therefore eligible to leave school, exactly what is needed for entry to a wide selection of careers. We then advise our pupils to decide the type of occupation which attracts them and for which they are likely to have the ability to qualify so that we can direct their education accordingly.

In choosing the end of the third year for this purpose we are

THE CAREERS CONVENTION

assure them that courses beyond the statutory leaving age are provided for all children who can profit from them; that these courses are an excellent preparation for adult life and the job of earning a good living; that they are varied and cater for all types of abilities and aptitudes, and are likely to lead to interesting, worthwhile occupations.

The fourth and final factor determining when the convention should be held is organizational. At the end of three years of the basic course we have all the information we set out to acquire in order to assess and direct our children. The time has come to give weight in the curriculum to specific aptitudes and talents and to bias the educational pattern for some pupils in a vocational direction. Our 'natural break' has arrived!

During the first three years of his school life at Woodberry Down each child will have been accumulating two sets of records, those kept by his housemaster, which have already been described and others collected by the deputy headmaster showing progress in each subject of the basic curriculum. These are known as the academic records and are divided into two groups:

- (a) Record showing assessment across the whole age group.
- (b) Record showing assessment in form group.

The grading used in both age group and form group is on a five-point system A to E.

In terms of marks out of 100, A would be interpreted as 100-81, B as 80-61, C as 60-41, D as 40-21 and E as 20-0.

Two gradings are shown in each group:

1. Year's work, which is assessed on marks given and work done during the year.
2. Attainment based on examination results.

Heads of departments are responsible for directing their panels of staff in making assessments and in ensuring that all are aware of the purpose of the records which can be defined as follows:

Age Group Assessment (which is entered on the academic record cards):

To obtain as accurate a record as possible of the children's work in relation to all other children in the age group:

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

the old elementary schools the ideal of 'liberal studies' and the advantage of 'developing a trained mind' are strange ideas in a school teacher's jargon. Even the *Certificate of Education* often is suspect.

'You can't earn your living with biology or netball or painting,' parents say to their children. 'Why don't they teach subjects that will be of some use to you in getting a good safe job?'

An additional complication in Stoke Newington and Hackney is caused by the unusually successful business acumen shown by many of the population who, uneducated in the accepted sense of the word, yet amass considerable sums of money in a short time. More than one nationally known organization has begun its existence in a couple of basement rooms in this neighbourhood and I have had facts such as these quoted to me by my pupils who are often encouraged to believe, not only by parents but by aunts, uncles and cousins, that a grain of common sense and 'go' is worth years in the schoolroom. Indeed I must admit that one lad who left most inauspiciously less than two years ago came recently to a school dance in a new expensive car, claiming, probably correctly, to have established a business in 'plastics' which he assured his house master 'brings me in a lot more money than you earn'. He did not lack listeners.

When the school opened and at subsequent meetings, as I have already said, parents and children all showed great enthusiasm and were very conscious of the wonderful opportunities available. But the comprehensive school is still the exception and not the rule in North London. When the child becomes fourteen and the year of school-leaving age is in sight the pressure of local opinion builds up in the home. The curriculum comes under fire; the demand that only 'useful' subjects should be taught grows in intensity. Golden opportunities to 'get in on the ground floor' of spectacular enterprises are sought. The age to get out and on in the world is fifteen, says local tradition.

This is the next reason why we call parents and children together at the end of the third year to remind them of the breadth of opportunity provided under the comprehensive system, to re-

THE CAREERS CONVENTION

table in our very spacious dining hall. Advice is given under these headings:

Army
Navy
Air Force
Police
Needle trades—retail—wholesale—*haute couture*
Domestic Science
Dietetics
Institutional Management
Librarianship
Local Government
Civil Service
Distributive Trades
Architecture
Surveying
Secretarial and General Commerce
Accountancy
Insurance
Post Sixth Form Business Careers
Furniture Trades
Teaching
Law
Medical Services
Nursing and Nursery Nursing
Art Courses at University and beyond
Science at University and beyond
Mathematics at University and beyond
Printing
Banking
Technology—University, Student Apprenticeships
Engineering—University, Student Apprenticeships
Electrical Engineering
Craft and Technical Apprenticeships
Agriculture and Related Occupations
Dramatic Art

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

To pursue and record any changes in attainment in individual subjects during children's life in the school:

To check whether children are working to the level of their ability as recorded on entry to the school:

To check any inaccuracy of assessment of ability on entry to the school:

To provide information for the assessment of progress in the basic course.

To provide information for use in discussing children's courses and careers:

Form Group Assessment (which is entered on form list and report book which goes home to parents):

To indicate children's attainment and work in relation to their own form groups, and to inform parents of this:

To give some satisfaction to children of low attainment who, nevertheless, have made praiseworthy efforts.

In the few weeks before the Careers Convention is held the four house masters and house mistresses collect together all the records of their third-year children. In a normal year this results in each house being responsible for the guidance of thirty-five boys and thirty-five girls. A complete picture of each child is assembled—from first-hand knowledge of interests, preferences and ambitions; from the academic records defining fully abilities, aptitudes and special talents; from the details of personal qualities and social attitude provided by the house files.

We invite specialists in many fields to come to the school early in the evening of the Convention. Over refreshments they are briefed on the purpose of their visit and the manner in which to frame their advice to the children and parents. Many of them are used to occasions such as this and either are known to us personally through their interest in the school or their services are obtained through the good offices of the Youth Employment Service. Our own heads of departments are able to co-operate with the visiting specialists in giving advice on careers involving their own particular subjects, the teaching profession and university courses.

Each group of specialists is allocated a labelled and numbered

THE CAREERS CONVENTION

- (a) Technology (University degrees and sandwich courses)
 - (b) Technical Apprenticeships (National Certificates)
 - (c) Craft Apprenticeships (City and Guilds)
5. Commerce:
- (a) Secretarial
 - (b) Accountancy
 - (c) General clerical
6. Needle trades, all branches.
7. General one-year course ending in July, bias on practical subjects.
8. General course for pupils leaving at end of term in which they become 15 years of age.

A plan of the dining hall, a key to the tables and the names of the specialist advisers are given.

The brochure has as its last page a statement which reads (I quote last year's):

AGREEMENT

I wish my son/daughter.....
Form..... House ..
to begin Course number..... in September 1958. I
understand Courses 1-6 are for at least 2 years' duration and end
therefore not earlier than July 1960.
Father's or Guardian's signature
Mother's signature... ..
Date.....

During the first half-hour of our programme, while I am addressing all the third-year children and their parents in our assembly hall, fourth, fifth and sixth form pupils avail themselves of the opportunity to consult the specialists in the dining hall. To those who are happily and certainly settled in their minds about future careers this is unnecessary, but others who have no specific ideas and still talk of 'the sort of thing I want' are very grateful to have together in one place so many knowledgeable people prepared to answer their questions.

In my introductory talk I stress the fact that suitable education beyond the statutory leaving age is available for all children who

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Commercial Art

Music.

The Youth Employment officers, my deputy and I each have a table in the hall so that children and parents can come to consult us if they wish to do so. Information can be obtained privately on grants available in cases of financial hardship and help in personal matters affecting the decision on continued education is offered by our welfare workers.

A few days before the Convention all children concerned take home a brochure printed on our school press which we ask them to read and discuss carefully with their parents. It begins with a letter from me which says:

Dear Parent,

Your son or daughter will be going into his or her 4th year of secondary school life in September next. It is very important that at this stage school and home combine to decide what is best for the child's future. Here we can advise you of your child's capabilities and aptitudes, but you must tell us whether you wish your child to continue education after the statutory leaving age of fifteen so that we can make our plans. I am therefore inviting every boy and girl in the third year, each with both parents where possible, to come to an important Careers Convention on Wednesday May 7th at 7.30 p.m.

In this booklet you will see the evening's programme, the courses which the school has to offer and the names of the many advisers who have kindly given their services to help you and your children. For parents who will need financial assistance a Care Committee representative and an adviser on maintenance grants will be present.

I hope every parent will make the greatest possible effort to be present, for this meeting vitally affects your child's future life.

The courses from the fourth year onwards are listed as follows:

1. General Certificate of Education (emphasis science subjects.)
2. General Certificate of Education (emphasis arts subjects.)
3. General Certificate of Education (emphasis craft or special bias to art, music, etc.)
4. Engineering courses leading to:

THE CAREERS CONVENTION

When I describe the needle trades courses I find it necessary to explain that these are a suitable training ground for many congenial posts not only in wholesale and retail garment making but in *haute couture*, dress-designing and indeed all branches of the industry. But we are near Hackney, and the parents' memories of the 'sweat-shop' tradition die hard. It is not easy to recruit for this trade in spite of excellent facilities and a most interesting course. We encourage not only girls with natural talent but boys who will be entering family businesses seriously to consider this training.

I have always found it most difficult on this occasion to advise parents of the least able children, for many wish to see their sons and daughters continuing at school until sixteen years of age or even longer. Obviously it would be educationally unsound to press such children into Certificate of Education courses, while it would be equally undesirable to encourage them to follow technical or commercial courses for which they showed no aptitude. We have not wished, however, to refuse any child the opportunity of continuing at school past the statutory leaving age and in the past general courses with a practical bias for boys or directed to the distributive trades for girls have been arranged. We are hoping to develop and extend this experimental work in order to ensure that the minority of children who cannot take any of the existing courses but are anxious to continue their education profitably are catered for fully in our organization. Detailed plans have been sent to the authority and we await a decision. Meanwhile parents and children are told of existing courses and their proposed extensions.

Pupils who wish to leave at fifteen years of age are made aware of the general non-vocational studies which are pursued in the last year at school and which are planned to give as wide a knowledge as possible of civic rights and responsibilities and the problems young workers are likely to meet as they go out into the world.

In conclusion children and parents are invited to do four things together following my talk. First to visit house masters and house mistresses and obtain their advice, although in the weeks preceding the Convention many such interviews will already have taken place. Next to collect from the house room a card which shows for each

wish to take advantage of it and that now, having taught them for three years, we know exactly the capabilities of every boy and girl and are in a position to help them decide the course of studies best suited to their particular abilities, aptitudes and characters. A statement of Britain's need of trained minds today and a reference to the atomic age in which men must know and understand each other's problems to avoid total destruction help to explain the purpose of teaching both the sciences and the humanities, although an assurance has to be given that vocational subjects and skills will not be neglected. I point out the risk to the average child of the offer of poor, unskilled employment 'which is bound to lead to something really big'.

The importance of the Certificate of Education as a qualifying examination for the university, the professions, branches of the Civil Service and many other careers in commerce and industry is outlined and this is followed by an explanation of our policy of organizing technical courses on three levels. The most able boy both academically and practically who is aiming at technological or engineering studies at university will proceed through 'Ordinary' level subjects with a bias to mathematics and sciences into the sixth form for an 'Advanced' course. The boy of good ability will seek, through the relevant 'Ordinary' level subjects, to obtain permission from the technical college to be exempted from the first year of his National Certificate in engineering. The boy who is good at craft will prepare for an apprenticeship taking him towards his City and Guilds examinations.

In commerce similar arrangements apply. Sixth form studies for admission to university courses in economics or statistics, for careers in accountancy, or for secretarial posts are available for children who show the necessary high ability at the end of the fifth year. Two-year courses in the fourth and fifth forms for pupils of good average standards combining some subjects in the Certificate of Education with shorthand and typewriting or accounts are arranged. For other children who are attracted by the prospect of office work but cannot reach this standard a two-year general clerical course is time-tabled.

commercial travellers or air hostesses! This year we had one lad who suffered from fainting spells pleading to be told how to become a steeplejack!

The evening ends late, never as yet before midnight. After the returns have been collected in during the days which follow, I call a series of meetings attended by my deputy, the senior mistress, the senior house master, the rest of the house staff and all heads of departments. Every child is considered individually and after discussion we decide whether he can be admitted to the course for which his parents have asked. In approximately 95 per cent of cases this is possible, due to the careful advisory work which preceded the Convention and the Convention itself. As I promised in my address to the parents, I get in touch with those whose requests we consider educationally unsound and suggest alternative plans. Very occasionally, the parents of a really able child ask for him to leave school at the statutory age. Again in these instances I contact the home in order to register a protest and recommend further consideration be given to the matter.

Once the children begin their fourth-year courses the house staff, as I have already described, keep a constant check on progress and any question of unsuitability raised either by teachers or pupils themselves is given careful attention. Frequent talks by visiting specialists are arranged covering most of the careers in which our children have shown an interest and the library and house rooms keep available an up-to-date selection of all relevant pamphlets and publications. *The Youth Employment and Careers Advisory Services are very helpful to us in this respect.*

In the three and a half years of our school's life the house staff have records of very few children who have needed to change from the courses they have begun in the fourth year. Occasionally a quite startling new talent or latent ability has redirected a clerk-to-be towards commercial art or a potential cashier towards nursing, but in the main the courses are sufficiently broad to allow even this adjustment of ambition to be effected satisfactorily.

When the time comes for children to leave school and take up employment *it is the house master who arranges and conducts the*

child an assessment of general ability based on a five-point scale, an indication of specific aptitudes, our recommendation on the course to be followed, comments on a satisfactory or unsatisfactory record in conduct, attention to homework, punctuality, attendance and grooming and finally a list of the numbers of the tables where advice can be obtained on the type of career likely to be suitable. Then to visit the dining hall and seek such information as is required. Finally to complete within a week the statement on the last page of the brochure in which we ask parents to state their wishes in the matter of the future education of their children.

I urge mothers and fathers to come to this decision after very careful discussion with their children and to ask for a two-year course only if they are all prepared to accept the moral obligation of our personal contract which, of course, has no legal significance. I point out the difficulties of staffing the school and continuing the courses unless we can foresee the future pattern of demand accurately and I give warning that I shall not deal tenderly with either children or parents who, without justifiable reason, seek to break an agreement. I give an assurance that if the child is badly placed, or new factors make a change of direction desirable, or should financial or other personal difficulties arise at home the house staff and I will always be prepared to discuss the circumstances with sympathy and suggest what remedies we can. I ask all to respect our motto 'Fellowship is Life' and in accepting all we are prepared to give, to do nothing at any time contrary to the welfare of the school community.

Finally I ask parents to understand that while we try to respect their wishes in the choice of suitable courses, it may not be possible if they move too far from our professional advice, and in these cases I shall invite them to come to school and discuss the situation again.

But each year to my table, regarding it apparently as the final court of appeal, come chubby short girls who tearfully say they have been advised against trying to become models, and boys with no mathematical ability who want to be atomic scientists and timid, self-effacing children who long for careers as hotel receptionists,

THE CAREERS CONVENTION

records which are regarded very seriously by all members of staff who realize that the assessing, measuring and recording abilities, aptitudes and qualities of character and personality are for a real purpose and that on their professional judgement the child's future may depend. At the end of our three-year course each pupil's potential can be seen; specialist studies with bias towards the requirements of particular groups of careers are then recommended.

As we believe most children can sway their parents' opinions in the decision on education past the statutory leaving age, we make the school through the atmosphere and tone we are developing, through its curriculum, through the many clubs, out-of-school activities and full social life a place where boys and girls are happy to be and content to stay. On the other hand because we want co-operation between home and school by means of our Careers Conventions we try to ensure that parents can understand and accept what we are giving their sixteen-, seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds as a preparation for the 'chance in life' they demand, and that they have the opportunity of sharing with us at all stages in any decisions made.

Finally, when our children come to the end of their school lives and are ready to take up the careers, or further training for the careers they have chosen, it is our intention that they should take more to the universities, the professions, the world of industry and commerce, the workrooms, shops and garages than the knowledge and skills which will bring them a consciousness of personal achievement in an intellectual or aesthetic sense or the satisfaction of personal ambition fulfilled. The years of sharing a common educational and social experience at Woodberry Down with their fellows now going out to take their various places in the world should give every young man and woman an appreciation of the part they are to play in society, an abhorrence of all prejudices and a true concern for the welfare and happiness of the whole community.

We hope our young citizens in future years will take the principles developed in 'an atmosphere of social unity' to the

interviews between pupil and parents and either Youth Employment Officer or Careers Adviser. The Careers Advisory Service caters for the older, more advanced boys and girls. In many cases we place the children ourselves, for as the school is developing and our work and standards become known many local people contact the house staff personally and ask to have suitable employees recommended to them. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement and it enables us to help and keep in touch with those youngsters who are likely to have particular difficulties in settling down at work.

Much of this personal contact has been established by visits various members of my staff and I have paid to many large industrial and commercial organizations and the acceptance of invitations by personnel and works managers to come and spend some time with us. This has not resulted in our streamlining the curriculum to suit the restricting demands of business interests as might be suspected, but we have been able to make certain concessions to our mutual advantage. For instance one excellent engineering firm has modified its views on a rather narrow training scheme in order to accommodate boys who wish to complete two-year courses with us before proceeding to apprenticeship. We, on the other hand, listened sympathetically to the views expressed by the training officer on certain points of workshop practice while we continue to press for a sandwich course for our most able boys who, with limited means, are seeking the way to university training.

When pupils in the sixth form are following 'Advanced' courses in order to qualify for university entrance, training college, sandwich courses, business or Civil Service careers, medical school and so on, the house masters and house mistresses invite members of staff with relevant specialist qualifications to act as tutors and to co-operate with them in continuing to give advice. This dual alliance seems to be working very well.

The school's policy in the important task of advising children on their future careers may be summed up in this fashion. House masters and house mistresses are responsible for knowing, personally and well, each child in their houses. They are helped by school

The Effect of the Comprehensive Principle on the Lives of Individual Children

THIS IS A CHAPTER about individual children and how they are progressing in our comprehensive school. Most of the stories are success stories. A few are failures and this reflects what is actually happening, for the majority of boys and girls are developing well. Many reasons can be suggested to explain why the very small minority has not been able to settle in with us but none, I think, are essentially attributable to weaknesses in the system of education itself.

Our sixth form in September 1958, it will be remembered, consisted almost entirely of pupils who had transferred to us when the school opened after two or three years in secondary modern, central or technical schools. The exceptions are a boy from Nigeria, another very recently arrived from Israel and a third who had his early education at boarding school. These three have no eleven plus assessment. Over half the sixth form pupils are not proceeding to full 'Advanced' level courses. Between twenty and thirty are combining further 'Ordinary' level subjects with technical or commercial training or are continuing their general education until they are old enough to enter their chosen careers. Nineteen,

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

conference tables of professional and academic bodies, to the Chamber of Commerce, to labour organizations and to shop stewards' meetings. It could be then, rather than at the annual announcement of the results of external examinations, that the *comprehensive schools' ultimate contribution should be assessed.*

THE EFFECT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PRINCIPLE

Irene put her views recently from the platform at a large meeting of sixth form boys and girls drawn from public and grammar schools and was, I understand, considered the most convincing speaker of the evening.

Allan, who spent his early years in boarding school, has become an outstanding craftsman besides reaching a high standard academically. He has been accepted for a three-year training college course to become a teacher of technical subjects and we look forward to welcoming him back when he is qualified. Fred also enters college this year to train to be a handicraft teacher and insists he too will return to Woodberry Down. Fred only scraped a central school selection at eleven plus and until three years ago saw his future in a furniture factory or garage. Both boys have taken full advantage of the out-of-school activities here joining in sports, in the debating society, in the motor-cycle club, theatre visits and playing leading parts in their house organization.

Hilary was head girl last year. She left her central school with no ideas about her future. At Woodberry Down she soon became a leading figure in the drama club and decided she wanted to be an actress. The precarious nature of a stage career was impressed on her but she was adamant. We have effected a compromise. In September she enters a teachers' training college which specializes in drama and speech training. Behind the footlights or in front of a class—Hilary regards both prospects happily.

Manny is a Nigerian. He will be applying for medical school next year and when he has qualified as a doctor he intends to return to his own country where he feels his services are more needed. His father is a Member of Parliament in Eastern Nigeria. His brother, now at university reading mathematics, and his sister, training to be a teacher, were sent by their father three years ago to Woodberry Down, and Manny joined them here the following year. He is most appreciative of the excellent science facilities available but is equally enthusiastic about his games and athletics and out-of-school cultural activities. He says of the system:

My personal opinion is that Comprehensive schools are the only type of schools worthy of the present and future scientific

however, are taking full 'Advanced' level courses. They and their parents have given me permission to quote something of their school histories to illustrate how the comprehensive school is tapping the great reservoir of young talent which was being lost to the nation under the tripartite system.

Bob is our head boy. He hopes to enter university to read for a degree in civil engineering. He is pursuing his academic studies in mathematics and science and is reaching a very satisfactory standard. He has already passed 'Advanced' level examinations in woodwork and technical drawing. Some sort of job in engineering was always Bob's ambition while he was at central school. Woodberry Down has raised his sights from apprenticeship to graduate status.

Irene is our head girl. She transferred to us from a central school where she had always expressed her desire to work with children, preferably as a nanny. She is entering university this year to read for a degree in English and intends, afterwards, to train for the teaching profession. Irene insists she will teach in a mixed comprehensive school. I asked her why and she said:

I feel different from my friends in the sixth forms of the grammar schools. They do not seem to mix easily with people who come from schools other than their own. They find it difficult to talk the same language as, for instance, the boys and girls in secondary modern schools.

'What has impressed you most about our type of educational system?' I questioned. She wrote the answer down.

Life in a comprehensive school has shown me that it is here there is the chance of the best secondary education for all children regardless of their parents' income or of their own previous achievements. In a Comprehensive school the children do not enter already labelled as failures of the eleven plus or the 'cream of their school'. They all begin on the same level and are given the same opportunities. Later they are settled on the courses for which they are best suited and which they themselves want to follow. And because children come to us from all types of homes and vary so much in abilities, the atmosphere is less stilted, more free and we all learn to mix easily in lesson time and in out-of-school activities.

background to make up but she is almost there and should begin her course either this or next year. Paula has decided to give up the idea of becoming a beauty specialist and has turned her ambitions to teaching infants. She comments:

I am able to mix freely and happily with all people as the school has taught me and I do not feel, as some grammar school children I know feel, that the rest of the community outside their own circle are outcasts.

Philip tells us, and we can well believe him, that at fourteen, at his central school, he had no interest in the future at all. He seemed to have just as little with us right into the fifth year, although his standard of attainment was promising. Now he states:

My attitude to education has changed radically in the past two years. Before this I regarded teachers and teaching with contempt. Now I realize that they and their profession are not as bad as I first imagined.

Who could ask for more?

Philip intends to read for an arts degree, then try for a post in industry which will allow him to travel in the Dominions.

Dick and Barry, who have vocational ideas similar to Philip's, John and Lloyd, who want sandwich courses in industry, Richard whose bent is scientific, Menahen who hopes for a university course followed by a career in aeronautical engineering, and Tom, who is taking his examinations for the Customs and Excise service, are all pursuing their ambitions at the top of the comprehensive school. Perhaps Ken has shown the most startling progress. Moving up in his sets each year he progressed from a low form to an academic course in the fourth year, obtained good passes in G.C.E. at 'Ordinary' level in mathematics, applied mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography, and English literature and is now taking three 'Advanced' level subjects in order to qualify, by means of a sandwich course, for a university degree in engineering.

Of these boys and girls only three have a parent or parents who received more than an elementary school education. Only two

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

world in which we live, catering as they must for the most intelligent and the weak, the scientific, literary or technically-minded students. I am glad my own country is fortunate enough to have an educational system of this type preparing all people to face the challenging world.

John was awarded a central selection at eleven plus. At 'Ordinary' level of the Certificate of Education he averaged more than 70 per cent in pure and applied mathematics and science. He shows signs of becoming a brilliant mathematician and intends to take this subject for a degree at university. He has an enormous capacity for hard work. When asked to comment on the comprehensive system he stated concisely, as usual, 'It gives you time to mature.'

Another John intended to take a technical course at his central school. He now hopes to follow a university course with a career overseas as a geologist. John finds his sixth form life limited, as do others, because lack of money has prevented his taking part in some out-of-school activities and journeys abroad. He is afraid, too, that for the same reason, his ambitions may not be realized.

Norma goes to training college this year and intends to teach in a comprehensive school eventually where she believes 'the future in education lies'. She has an individual point of view. She says:

I am absolutely sure that it was through acting as Secretary to the Debating Society that I passed my English language at 'O' level, for by continually writing down the minutes I improved my précis, which had always been weak. All the visits to the opera, Sadler's Wells, the Ballet, concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, art galleries, lectures and conferences have been invaluable to me both as a person and as a prospective teacher. I feel confident that if I wanted to take up anything in this school I could do it, but as far as I am concerned there is nothing I wanted which has not been provided.

Sybil had already left secondary modern school when she came and asked whether she could join Woodberry Down and qualify for teachers' training college. She has had a very great deal of

careers before they reach the sixth form, but as their courses are individually planned to develop their abilities and particular aptitudes it is unlikely that any new and realizable ambitions will need to be frustrated. Their standard of academic attainment is so good that the majority of these children are taking some subjects at 'Ordinary' level this year, at the end of their fourth year course.

David intends to follow his father's footsteps into the medical profession. He hopes to specialize in surgery and horrifies his companions when he assures them that he won't earn any money until he's at least twenty-five. Celia refuses to limit the range of her imagination by stating any definite intentions about the future. Her wide interests suggest to her a choice of three careers—law, journalism or teaching English. Jonathan, who is reputed to make notes from the *Encyclopedia Britannica* during the evenings in order to catch his teachers out in lessons next day, intends to study science and become a research chemist possibly in Israel. Mary wishes to aim at scientific research too. We are very pleased to see, in this year, many girls who have a mathematical and scientific ability equal to the boys, for in our first three years of existence girls in the senior forms have asked almost exclusively for concentration on the arts subjects.

I asked a group of thirty boys and girls from this same year who had chosen to leave at statutory age to write me an essay telling me what they had liked and disliked about Woodberry Down and whether they would rather have gone to a secondary modern school, for all had received a 'modern' selection. Without exception they all wrote that they were glad they had come to the comprehensive school. I had taught these pupils for two terms and I am sure they were uninhibited enough to write sincerely.

Stephen wrote:

I want to leave so that I can start buying my own clothes and so that I don't have to rely on my mum and dad. I did not want to train for a good job for the same reason. I am glad I came to this school. The teachers are alright, workshops excellent, gym perfect. The only thing I don't like is staying in half an hour for being one or two minutes late.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

believe their continued education will not be a source of financial hardship in their homes.

When our first comprehensive intake based on a cross-section of ability reaches the sixth form in 1961 we shall see in addition to the type of pupils I have just described, that is the boys and girls who did not qualify as suitable for academic education at eleven plus but who have proved the assessment to be inaccurate, the pupils who did obtain a grammar selection and have justified it. These children are now in their fourth year, where approximately a third of the three hundred admitted are following academic courses, a third have been advised to take special studies in engineering, commerce or the needle trades and the rest are continuing their general education.

In the highest academic form, based on general ability, twenty-seven boys and girls are preparing to take their Certificate of Education in eight or nine subjects. Twenty-one have stated their intention of staying for at least two years in the sixth form. These are the careers or courses the form is envisaging:

| | |
|--|----|
| University | 10 |
| (Arts, Science, Mathematics, Technology or Engineering) | |
| Doctor | 1 |
| Lawyer | 1 |
| Accountant | 3 |
| Agriculture | 1 |
| Banking | 2 |
| Architect | 1 |
| Librarian | 1 |
| Nursing | 1 |
| Secretarial | 1 |
| Draughtsman | 1 |
| Ophthalmic Optician | 1 |
| Reporter (linguist) | 1 |
| Air Hostess | 1 |
| Beautician | 1 |

Many of these boys and girls will change their minds about

Joan has many pleasant memories and sums up:

The best of these are the nice buildings, nice boys and girls, plenty of activities and dances and the teachers willing to give up their time after school hours.

I am sorry these children left us at fifteen years of age but I do not regard them by any means as failures. For many reasons, some almost outside their own control, there will always be boys and girls who wish to leave school at statutory age. So long as they end their days with us believing they have been fairly treated, that they have been valuable and equal members of the community sharing fully in the complete life of the school, they will take away with them a mental and moral attitude reflecting the comprehensive school spirit.

The house staff keep me informed of all children whose progress could only have been made under the comprehensive system. I have a long list of such pupils. These are characteristic.

George of Einstein came to us at twelve years of age with such a low standard of attainment that he was admitted to the eighth form group. He made great efforts throughout the second and third years and by the fourth year was ready for admission to an academic course. He is a very good athlete, very promising at art and wants to become a school teacher. His prospects are good.

Barbara, also of Einstein, received a low secondary modern grading. She has progressed through sets and is now in the fifth year where she has been following a commercial course. However, her outstanding musical talent has now so developed that she wishes to take the subject to 'Advanced' level and to enter training college with the intention of teaching music eventually. As the school policy is to combine commercial and technical courses with the Certificate of Education, Barbara can change her plans with little difficulty.

In Keller, Norman, hampered when he came to us at twelve by language difficulties, for he is of Norwegian origin, has moved from the sixth group in the second year to the top engineering group in the fifth. He is aiming, with a good chance of success, at 'Advanced'

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Ronald tells me:

I have liked the Comprehensive school because I have enjoyed the workshops but I haven't liked the prefects—that is some of them. I have enjoyed the Drama Festivals. I don't like games but I like the coach ride to get there. I am not sorry I didn't go to a modern school. My friends went to one and all the time they were there they had never heard of clubs or educational visits or school journeys like I have been on.

Stuart also likes the workshops and games. He comments:

I like playing Rugby for the school and I also like the after school clubs. I have to leave because I am going in the print and after 15 years they do not take boys for apprenticeships.

Ivan sums up vehemently if inaccurately:

I have liked the Comprehensive school very much because it *give you more sport, educational visits and lots of clubs and you meet all kinds of children*. I am glad I did not go to a secondary modern school because the atmosphere is different. No rules. No prefects. Hardly any educational visits and mostly the villains and rough people go there. The things that I like is that it has everything you require—workrooms, gyms and art and pottery rooms. I want to leave school because I want to be a hairdresser and serve an apprenticeship and *earn my own wages* and because I do not want to stay on longer than I could help.

The girls expressed similar views. Katherine wrote:

I want to leave school at 15 because I want to start work and work my way up. I have liked this school because it is very sociable and they have good clubs. *This school helps you get on.*

Marian likes the dances and drama festivals and she makes a point which is also made by all except two of the group when she states:

Most schools have no uniform and so the people who wear good clothes often take it out of the shabbier people. I will remember the fairness of most of the teachers and the way the Grammar, Central or Modern children are treated the same way.

THE EFFECT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PRINCIPLE

club and was rarely absent from any school function in which he could join. Using the money he saved doing a paper round and for performing other chores he paid for himself and for his sister, also a pupil at the school, to take part in a school journey to Italy. When he left after completing his technical course he became an apprentice in an engineering firm and is doing well in his training.

After Ernie had left he wrote and told me how he appreciated all that was done for him and boys like him. He said:

One of the things I liked at Woodberry Down was the way teachers gave up their free time in the dinner hour and after school to run clubs. Another funny thing was that when you were in trouble they did not give you the cane straight away but they tried talking to you first and if that didn't work well, you got it. The only thing I didn't like was wearing a hat.'

He also commented on our mixed-ability groups in his own way:

Children who had not passed at eleven plus and only got secondary modern were put in some classes with grammar and central school children. If you were only secondary modern like I was you knew you had to work hard to keep up with them.

At the last drama festival, Ernie, an old scholar, sat in the balcony and pondered sadly. When I spoke to him afterwards he said:

Yes it's true, miss, it really is. They are the happiest days of your life!

If we can make all our 'tough' boys think like Ernie we shall be performing a valuable task first and foremost for the lads themselves and secondly for society.

Lindy of Scott had been to progressive private schools and her mother and doctor wondered whether she could settle in the atmosphere of a school such as ours. After some minor initial difficulties she adapted herself most satisfactorily. When some months after her admission I sought the family reaction I was told:

We asked her why she is so happy and she said, 'Well they tell you to do things and it seems sensible to do them.' To think we

level studies and university via a sandwich course. Many other pupils with language problems have been helped by the assistance of our specialist staff. Malka of Scott, now in the Sixth form studying Italian, German and Hebrew, could speak no English less than three years ago. Anna-Maria of Scott, who recently took a leading role in our drama festival and is expected to enter the sixth form in September with a university degree in modern languages as her objective, had only a few halting phrases in English when she was admitted two years ago. Tamara of Einstein, from Israel and speaking only modern Hebrew, was taken under the wing of our Jewish teachers and settled into the school quickly and happily.

Only on the staff of a large school is it likely there could be found enough teachers with specialist qualifications to deal adequately with the variety of language difficulties thrown up by this cosmopolitan neighbourhood.

Regina of Scott has a record of which I am particularly proud. Born with spastic paralysis, we were not sure that she would even move about our large buildings without unbearable fatigue, and her early education had naturally been sorely neglected. When I see her now, a good effective prefect, still moving slowly but very confidently and planning her sixth form career which she hopes will lead to a Diploma in Social Sciences, I remember the day when she was admitted and her mother asked if there was any future for the stricken child. 'Print my story, please!' Regina said to me. 'It may give heart to others like me.'

Ernie of Curie is not with us now. He left in July 1958 and the school has never been quite the same. Weighing fourteen stone and of a deceptively ferocious appearance he was once depicted, whip in hand, in a cartoon in the school newspaper as the prefect who was the 'monster of the boys' staircase'. Ernie came to us tough, disliking school intensely and longing to leave. His mother expressed her anxiety about his future. After two terms Ernie had changed all his views. He became a champion athlete at the District Sports and represented London in putting the weight. He played rugby for the school First XV, boxed for his house, and won his athletic colours. He became a leading light in the drama

mother remarried in England. From the first day he was admitted Mark was a disciplinary problem. He was disobedient, insolent, untruthful, his temper uncontrollable. He fought with the girls and this, in return, brought down on him the wrath of other boys.

His mother came at my request to see me. She said she had other children, whom Mark treated dreadfully. He stayed out at night. Eventually, in spite of the efforts of his house master, he was placed in care of the council for a short time pending investigation.

He came back to school and was in trouble at once. I sent for him and he came warily into my room, his dark eyes hostile. I tried to make him talk, to find out what was wrong. At first I got nowhere but finally he blurted out, 'I'm coloured.'

'Mark,' I said, 'so are dozens of happy boys and girls here. You know our school motto "Fellowship is Life". You come into my morning services. We believe all men are brothers. The colour of your skin doesn't matter. Can't you learn to trust us and see that we want to help you?'

'I don't want to stay with you,' he said. 'I don't want to stay at home. I hate everybody. I want to go back in the council home. I was the only coloured one there. They liked me.'

'Mark,' I urged, 'why does that matter? Your brothers and sisters are like you. There are more than twenty boys and girls here like you. Why do you want to be where you are the only one?'

He looked at me suddenly, sitting quite still, like an old spent man.

'No one is like me. I am the only one here,' he said. 'I am the only one at home. Can't you see? They're all brown. I'm black, quite black.'

We couldn't help Mark to solve his emotional difficulties in spite of all our efforts. There was too much against us. He is back in the council home and very contented according to reports.

We cannot claim, then, to have resolved successfully the problems of every child who came to us in the three and a half years of our school life. I have illustrated the two most common causes of

spent so much money ensuring her happiness through allowing her to grow up uninhibited, then she gets a little discipline and all is well!

Lindy is now in the fifth form and is deciding whether she should follow her 'Advanced' studies with a course at art college, drama academy or university. She is one of the happiest girls in the school.

A few children have chosen to leave Woodberry Down. Each year one or two girls who could follow a commercial course with us are taken away by their parents in order to attend a fee-paying business college where, so I am told, more time is spent on shorthand and typing and less wasted on unnecessary futilities such as science, art, music and history.

One boy, who came to us at thirteen years of age, unable to read and write, was given tests, the results of which showed that there was no reason why he should not learn. We even had a special meeting of teachers who taught him and decided that at every lesson he should have a few minutes' individual attention.

This brought his mother to see me.

'The teachers are all getting at him,' she complained. 'It's victimization.'

I explained all that was being done.

'You don't want your son to go out to work unable to read and write if we can do something about, do you?' I asked.

'He can't learn,' she insisted. 'His other school left him alone. He did messages or painted. He's a nervous boy. Takes after me. Can't you tell them all to leave him be.'

We went on trying, carefully, tactfully, attempting to build up his confidence. He began to make progress, but was very resentful and insisted he couldn't learn.

Eventually we had a note from his doctor saying he was developing a nervous condition. In the face of medical opinion we could do no more, although we had seen no deterioration in the boy's mental health. His mother removed him from the school and he left happily.

Finally and very recently, there was Mark, a little boy just in England from the West Indies. His father was still there; his

THE EFFECT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PRINCIPLE

are raised and I have to arrange a further discussion. There are times when some waiting children have to be told at the end of the dinner hour that unless the *matter is urgent* they must come again on another day. They accept this in good spirits and they do return. That is why I have been able to write this chapter.

failure. When the home influence is very strong and parents set their faces obstinately against the provision, of a broad education demanding instead a concentrated narrow training in vocational skills, the comprehensive school is rejected. But people with these ideas would react similarly to any type of secondary school which insisted on fulfilling its proper function. About 1 per cent of the pupils in each year leave us, we feel ill-advisedly, in this fashion.

Similarly we can do less than is required for some children with deep-seated psychological disturbances in spite of conscientious co-operation with the Child Guidance authorities, for such pupils can need individual, skilled attention at every moment of the day if tension is to be avoided and progress made, and this is virtually impossible. But again where we have admitted failure, it has been only following consistent effort on the part of all concerned and we believe it is not the comprehensive system, but normal secondary schooling which has been proved inadequate for the peculiar needs of the child's mental or emotional condition. Fortunately only one or two pupils each year are in this unhappy position.

I set aside a time each day in the dinner hour when children can come directly to talk to me. Sometimes they are sent by a house master or another member of staff or advised by a parent to see me but more often than not individual boys and girls, or less frequently small groups decide they would like to come and just talk. 'Why can't we boat on the reservoir?' they ask, or, 'Should prefects put us in detention?' 'My mother says I can't have a pony tail in school. May I?' 'Is Oxford University all it's cracked up to be?' 'I want a half-crown frock. My friend says you have a cupboard full of them.' 'I am Jewish but I want to go into Christian religious instruction lessons—just to find out about other ideas. Is that right?'

All questions which could be answered by a house master or a form teacher! But it is not the answer to the question that the children come for in the majority of cases. It is to make sure that they have the right to talk to their headmistress and that they can, if they wish, make themselves known to her. They expect personal attention. Of course there are occasions when important matters

panama-hatted, drew crowds of cheering, encouraging Italians to the water's edge. Apparently children educated in a comprehensive school were well able, quite unconsciously, to continue the tradition of the 'mad Englishman' established by quite a different sort of traveller.

During the eighteen days of our journey we watched new friendships form, new ideas develop, new attitudes change the relationship of child to child or child to teacher. Those who knew something of art took their friends into the galleries and gave determined instruction; the churches and public buildings were well visited. Other pupils who insisted they had 'soon picked up the language' took over responsibility for bartering in the markets. Looking at paintings in the Uffizi, the sculptures of Michelangelo, the tower of Pisa or Puccini's home, sun-bathing and swimming, dressing correctly for dinner, travelling sensibly and responsibly our boys and girls were a harmonious if not a homogeneous group. The future teacher, doctor and lawyer were richer in experience for sharing and enjoying their temporary adherence to the ranks of the 'Teddies', although it must be admitted that this excursion was at all times law-abiding and harmless, possibly indeed due to their influence. Certainly there were times when the personal habits of some children offended others, when loudly-expressed uninformed opinions caused embarrassment, or impatience, when tastes clashed or personalities grated but in a startlingly short time adjustments were made. A friendly tip here, a mild leg-pull there or even on occasions a burst of temper and an angry exchange of views and the children established for themselves a way of life which they could all accept and appreciate—a richer, fuller way of life yet one accepting certain obligations and disciplines. The boys and girls would say they were learning to mix easily; the staff that social integration was accelerated when children had the opportunity of living together even for as short a period as eighteen days. Certainly the adjustments in attitude and approach appeared to be made naturally and painlessly by these impressionable adolescents, not yet inhibited by the rigidity of adult conventional behaviour patterns.

Learning to Live Together, School Journeys, Educational Visits, Clubs

WE WENT TO ITALY in August of 1957—sixty boys and girls, my deputy, the senior master and mistress and I. The children came from all forms in the third year and above. They travelled out and returned in school uniform; at other times informal attire was recommended. 'Teddy' suits were forbidden.

The markets of Florence delighted our teen-agers. They loved the colour and warmth and flamboyant displays of cheap attractive clothes. Soon some of our older lads had discovered tight dark cotton jeans, brief patterned shirts, string ties and broad-brimmed panama hats which worn together gave something of the dash of the outfits we had insisted were left at home. The fashion spread rapidly and when we moved on to Viareggio some of our 'good' boys, always soberly dressed in England, had succumbed to the temptation to dress up and join the troop.

On the beach our children soon established their identity, for in the customary fashion, we hired our chairs, sun-umbrellas and bathing huts for the period of our stay. The behaviour of our boys and girls was exemplary and they were regarded with affection and amusement by other holiday-makers. On one occasion when a boat capsized, the sight of our lads, swimming solemnly ashore, still

As, however, it is school policy for all journeys abroad to be taken in the holidays, we prefer to interpret broadly their educational nature so that in fact each enrolls a group which is roughly a cross-section of our pupils in ability. Younger children are encouraged to ask for the shorter visits involving the least travelling.

In these three years there have been a number of visits abroad besides the one to Florence and Viareggio. Journeys have taken children to the French and German speaking parts of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Paris and Rome. Our school newspaper prints various accounts and it is by no means only the boys and girls who shine at English who are stimulated into self-expression. Under the headline of 'The Invasion of Europe' on 7 June 1957, Martin wrote:

We went by coach to Spakenberry where the inhabitants still wear the traditional costumes, even on bicycles; to Arnhem, where we went to the open-air folk-lore museum containing windmills and houses from every part of Holland; and to the cemetery outside Arnhem. On Saturday we went to Amsterdam where we saw the famous 'Night Watch' by Rembrandt and after a trip through the canals and docks we did some shopping.

Starlight rambles led by Dutch boys, a glimpse of the Royal Family on Queen Juliana's birthday—these are memories recorded with pleasure. Brenda describes with a wealth of detail her sight-seeing in Luxembourg and Germany but reports sadly that the coach hired to carry the party on an excursion into France 'was not carrying the necessary papers so we could not cross the frontier!'

On 5 November 1958 Norman told us of his adventures among the mountains of Davos, but he expressed the surprised indignation of the party as he wrote:

The food was typically English, with chips every evening and other dishes which I have seen somewhere before. We had a very good waiter, a rather helpful character called Jim. He was the porter and receptionist, sold stamps and postcards and was chief washer-upper. He was also the owner. He had only two maids to

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

We are sending an average of a hundred and fifty children abroad in four parties each year. The cost varies from fifteen to thirty-five pounds each according to the country visited and the duration of the stay. The London County Council aids all children over fourteen years of age with a school journey grant and gives special additional sums of money to those in necessitous circumstances. In addition from the welfare section of our school fund we help any pupils recommended by the staff as deserving places on a journey but whose family circumstances prevent the parents meeting all, or indeed any, of the cost. Our parents' association, the Mayor's fund and other local charities can also be tapped on behalf of such children. This year one fourteen-year-old boy is having all his expenses for a visit to Paris paid from this variety of sources. He is a brilliant pupil who, providing he can complete his education, will go to university and probably later enter the medical profession. Obviously these matters are conducted in a completely confidential manner and before the machinery of cost-covering begins I have a private talk to the child and parents concerned and explain what I want to do, and why I want to do it. When we look at the needs of the individual child it is not difficult to decide what the decision should be! Sometimes even when the cost of the journey has been met additional footwear and clothing may be necessary. Then the Care Committee, the welfare workers associated with the school, step in and provision can be made.

Even for parents with reasonable incomes the expenses involved are not light. Consequently weekly collections of money are made from the autumn of the year preceding the one in which journeys abroad are to take place. This gives a period of from six to nine months during which families can arrange to save the necessary money.

Without exception children of all abilities have applied to go on every journey proposed. It is possible, occasionally, for the particular nature of the programme to restrict the party to those pupils with a special aptitude. For instance the teacher organizing a visit to Belgium 'to make a study of its art and creatively to interpret and record' allowed only members of his art club to join in.



13. Chess Club

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

help him. I think he was glad to get rid of us because we ate so much.

Before each party leaves every member is issued with a booklet, printed at school, containing the programme, geographical notes, useful foreign phrases and some reminders of the standards of conduct expected, such as:

Remember your behaviour can bring credit or discredit to yourself, your party, your school and England. When abroad you are a representative with more responsibilities than when at home. Be courteous, polite and considerate for others at all times. These qualities are recognized by everyone, irrespective of language.

To a junior group travelling for the first time the organizing staff issue this simple direct advice:

Remember your behaviour, manners, speech! The Belgians will be watching you (so will we!) They may judge all British children by your standards. Do not forget they may understand English even if they do not speak English.

Have you written home?

Are you clean and tidy?

Have you tidied your room?

Did you clean your teeth today?

Are your shoes clean?

Do you know where to find your teacher-in-charge?

Do you know your hotel address and can you find your way back in an emergency?

Before leaving your room look in the mirror.

If you feel unwell or have even the slightest accident report at once to a member of staff.

Many members of the travelling public have taken the trouble to telephone or write to me on the impression made by our children. The comments have invariably been complimentary. In an hotel in Switzerland last year, the other guests requested the manager to allow our children to use a lounge from which school parties were normally banned. One letter remarks:

I have had a great deal of experience on the Continent and in

fairness must admit that some of the criticisms levelled against school parties can be, to some extent, justified, and I feel sure you will be pleased to know that the standard set by your school, if copied, would do much to remove the stigma. The discipline maintained by your staff was not of a nature which prevented the children enjoying themselves and giving vent to their natural, youthful exuberance and energy. On the contrary, every individual I spoke to was thoroughly enjoying the tour.

Another, this time from the director of a well-established travel agency who journeyed to Belgium with a number of school parties, comments:

I was most favourably impressed by the turnout and behaviour of the children and the firm control shown by members of the staff. This first impression has now been confirmed by the report of the tour I have received from my leader. He writes that the boys and girls behaved remarkably well. I have had some considerable experience now in school travel and, privately, am not much impressed by some school parties that I have seen abroad. Indeed one of the first things which attracted my attention on that Friday was two small English boys walking round Victoria Station with cigarettes drooping from their mouths! I rarely write such a letter as this, but when the occasion arises it gives me all the greater pleasure to be able to do so.

I do not quote these facts in praise of my able, conscientious staff, deserving of it though I believe them to be, but to illustrate further our contention that when children of all types and abilities are together under any favourable conditions what can be expected is not a levelling-down of educational and social standards but a levelling-up. Perhaps I should admit, too, that under the comprehensive system we like to use the occasion to make it known that, despite a section of public opinion, we are as concerned with good order and discipline as those of our colleagues in any other types of school.

School journeys in the British Isles are also organized, during holiday periods, although some, such as the geographical field trips, consist almost entirely of hard academic and practical work.



14. Drama Club. Senior boys in mime-drama 'War and Peace'

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Another, this time from the director of a well-established travel agency who journeyed to Belgium with a number of school parties, comments:

I was most favourably impressed by the turnout and behaviour of the children and the firm control shown by members of the staff. This first impression has now been confirmed by the report of the tour I have received from my leader. He writes that the boys and girls behaved remarkably well. I have had some considerable experience now in school travel and, privately, am not much impressed by some school parties that I have seen abroad. Indeed one of the first things which attracted my attention on that Friday was two small English boys walking round Victoria Station with cigarettes drooping from their mouths! I rarely write such a letter as this, but when the occasion arises it gives me all the greater pleasure to be able to do so.

I do not quote these facts in praise of my able, conscientious staff, deserving of it though I believe them to be, but to illustrate further our contention that when children of all types and abilities are together under any favourable conditions what can be expected is not a levelling-down of educational and social standards but a levelling-up. Perhaps I should admit, too, that under the comprehensive system we like to use the occasion to make it known that, despite a section of public opinion, we are as concerned with good order and discipline as those of our colleagues in any other types of school.

School journeys in the British Isles are also organized, during holiday periods, although some, such as the geographical field trips, consist almost entirely of hard academic and practical work.



14. Drama Club. Senior boys in mime-drama 'War and Peace'

pitched their tents at Borrowdale at midnight in conditions of snow and ice. All stayed the course and all candidates passed the tests. Plans for the return journey were upset, however, for when the time came to board the early morning bus two sixteen-year-old boys were missing. They were found on a farm, fascinated by a sight they had never seen before—cows being milked.

By Easter 1959 these boys had raised enough money organizing dances and various entertainments to buy good camping and mountaineering equipment. They now possess their own tents, sleeping bags, cooking stoves, rucksacks, nylon and hemp climbing ropes, slings and karabiners, ice-axes and all the dangerous looking paraphernalia dear to the hearts of town-bred lads who discover the excitement and hazards of country pursuits. Some boys will enjoy expeditions with the school through to their sixth form years; others leaving at fifteen or sixteen years of age are encouraged to join a group attached to the Y.M.C.A. in Islington where they can either continue to take part in the awards, or just join forces with other youngsters who have acquired a taste for healthy open-air life.

The awards scheme which emphasizes the need for young people to be given the maximum opportunities to develop and live fully while learning to use their talents to serve the community, fits particularly well into our school where the boys and girls are encouraged by very similar ideals.

Other occasions when children can be together off the school premises occur frequently as a result of an allocation of money, the Activities and Amenities Allowance, made to each school by the Council. Instead of normal lessons visits of educational value are organized. Groups of pupils, as far as possible whole teaching units, either forms or sets or mixed ability groups, pursue off the school premises aspects of their studies impossible in the classroom. Such visits have been made to the Cheddar Gorge, the Roman remains at St. Albans, the London Planetarium, Stratford-on-Avon, Knole Park; to many museums and art galleries; to the theatre, to orchestral concerts and the ballet; to the Ideal Home Exhibition, to Wimbledon, to national newspapers in Fleet Street.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Children interested in geography and geology spend weeks before the trip preparing maps, diagrams and charts relevant to a regional study. The objectives of our last trip to Malhamdale in Yorkshire were defined for the children as follows:

- To collect rock specimens and fossils;
- To study underlying rocks and physical formations;
- To survey local building material;
- To study the relationship between vegetation, soil and underlying rock;
- To make notes and diagrams of old settlements and cultivation systems;
- To study the use of the land and the industrial development in the area;
- To study the growth of Gargrave in detail as a special project.

Again the London County Council gives grants for this type of course and we in our turn ensure that all children who could profit from attendance are given the opportunity of joining in.

During the Easter holidays 1958 and 1959 groups of senior boys set up camps among the mountains of Cumberland in order to plan and carry out expeditions which form part of the tests by which they can qualify for the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards. Our school is one of twenty conducting a pilot experiment on the scheme in the London area. Some boys have already received the bronze and silver medals awarded at the end of the first and second series of tests and are pressing on to the third series which, if successfully completed, obtains for them the coveted gold medal, the highest award. His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, Sir John Hunt and their advisers have set standards which can be achieved by the average boy who keeps himself physically fit, develops sound interests and qualities of initiative, and shows that he can complete with thoroughness a task he sets himself. As can be imagined boys in all forms with a sense of adventure ask to join. Others, whose energies, in our opinion, could profitably be re-directed, are encouraged to enrol. A memorable visit of Sir John Hunt to Woodberry Down gave a great stimulus to recruitment.

In 1958 the boys and staff, after a coach journey from London,

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

English language and literature and ensures that the future technicians and dressmakers are **not limited** in their cultural development by a narrow interpretation of what constitutes vocational training.

The third aspect of the social life of Woodberry Down can be classified under the broad heading of extra-curricular activities or, more popularly, out-of-school clubs. A few of these are held in the dinner hour but most take place in the early evening. Our working day ends officially at 4.5 p.m. but from Monday to Friday in halls, libraries, laboratories, studies, practical centres, classrooms, gyms and playgrounds children and teachers will be found, often as late as six o'clock, pursuing a wide variety of interests. Some of these are natural developments of subject teaching such as clubs for science, history, and geography. Others bring individual talents together in a corporate effort in choirs, orchestras, mime-dramas, plays, debates. Activities we, as a profession, consider good for the younger generation are available. Alternative pursuits the pupils judge as suitable for themselves as teen-agers in 1959 in touch with and sympathetic to contemporary trends are encouraged by those members of staff who find it possible to share, without condescension, enthusiasms too often condemned out of hand by self-righteous adults. Tough, adventurous activities are deliberately offered to youngsters whose superabundance of energies need healthy outlets, while games and athletics receive enthusiastic support from hundreds of boys and girls of all ages. The weekly programme reads as follows:

Monday

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Chess Club | All years | Lunch time |
| Junior Christian Fellowship | 1st and 2nd years | Lunch time |
| Recorder Club | 1st to 4th years | Lunch time |
| Handicraft Club (wood and metal) | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Debating and discussion | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Physical Education Training (boys) | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Spring-Boxing | All years | 4.15 p.m. |

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

Fourth and fifth formers whose vocational interests are established have regular opportunities to visit factories, centres of industry, banks, insurance offices, travel agencies, design and craft centres. For these visits it is customary for children to wear school uniform and they are encouraged to be particularly careful about personal appearance.

As my needle trade courses developed and arrangements were made for sixteen-year-old girls to go with their teacher to West End dress shows a little restlessness became noticeable. I asked what it was about. The head of department told me:

'All the people at these places are madly keen on *haute couture*! They wear such lovely clothes. I know our girls look nice at school in grey skirts and little felt hats, but at Victor Stiebel's or Ronald Pattison's or Charles Creed's they all feel out of place, poor things.'

The girls now prepare complete dress show ensembles as part of their course. Very smart they look too—as elegant as any young ladies from a select finishing school, as they set out on the afternoons which bridge the gap between school and career, between Stoke Newington and Mayfair.

Evening visits to theatres, concerts and the ballet are either paid for out of our Activities and Amenities Allowance, or by individual children helped out, when it is desirable, by a subsidy from the School Fund. Senior boys and girls from all courses form groups on these occasions. In the early months of our existence as a school many pupils were introduced for the first time to serious drama. I well remember joining the English staff and some fifth and sixth formers at a performance of a Restoration comedy in a West End theatre. In the intervals the boys and girls commented politely to their teachers on the performance, but as we left the theatre a sixteen-year-old engineer was heard to say to his companion in tones of utter disgust, 'Cor, is that really culture? Is that what we've to put up with?' Nowadays we find as much genuine interest in and appreciation shown of the theatre by seniors who are following technical or commercial courses as by those who are pursuing academic studies. This is explained by our policy of 'setting'

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Games Club (girls) | 1st and 2nd years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Drama Club (girls) | 1st and 2nd years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Dress Design | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Duke of Edinburgh's Award (boys) | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Mountaineering | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |

Thursday

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Chess Club | All years | Lunch time |
| History Club | 1st, 2nd, 3rd years | Lunch time |
| Boat Building Club | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Handicraft Clubs (wood and metal) | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Past and Present Club | 5th and 6th years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Tennis Club (summer) | 4th, 5th, 6th years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Science Model Making | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Spoken Drama Club | 4th year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Art Club | 1st year | 4.15 p.m. |

Friday

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Swimming Club (boys) | All years | Before school |
| French Play Reading | 2nd year | Lunch time |
| Recorder Club | 1st year | Lunch time |
| Fencing Club | 2nd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Piano Classes | All years | 4.15 p.m. |

During the course of each term other recreational activities are organized at intervals. These have included instruction in ballroom and folk dancing, skiffle sessions, the showing of films recognized as classics, guitar making and playing lessons, dances to which pupils of neighbouring schools are invited and house socials. Last year thirty children from the American Community School in Paris, who pay us an annual visit, were entertained to a birthday party given in honour of one of their members by more than two hundred of our third-year boys and girls. While the fourteen-year-old girl from New York cut the cake we had made at school, an iced and decorated sponge sufficient to provide three hundred

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Summer Athletics | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Stamp Club | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Biology Club | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Orchestra | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Violin | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Brass band | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Duke of Edinburgh Award (girls) | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Photography | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| <i>Tuesday</i> | | |
| Chess Club | All years | Lunch time |
| Recorder Club | 1st year | Lunch time |
| Art Club | All years | Lunch time and 4.15 p.m. |
| Violin classes | 1st to 4th years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Drama Club | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Choir (boys) | 1st year | 4.15 p.m. |
| Badminton Club | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| First Aid | Duke of Edinburgh's Award pupils | 4.15 p.m. |
| Swimming Club (girls) | 2nd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Dress Design Club | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Motor Bike (Summer, maintenance and driving) | Seniors only | 4.15 p.m. |
| <i>Wednesday</i> | | |
| Chess Club | All years | Lunch time |
| Geography Club | All years | Lunch time |
| Senior Christian Fellowship | 3rd year and above | Lunch time |
| Physical Education Club (boys) | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Boat building Club | 3rd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |
| Choir | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Handicraft Club (wood and metal) | All years | 4.15 p.m. |
| Fencing Club | 2nd year and above | 4.15 p.m. |

A further reason for our concentration of activities after 4.5 p.m. is explained by the large incidence in our district of 'latch-key' children—boys and girls with mothers at work who are expected to look after themselves until six or seven o'clock at night. These unsupervised, empty hours can be very dangerous to the child whose resentment, sometimes unconscious, leads him to look for the mischief which will result in his gaining all his parents' attention once more. House masters and house mistresses, knowing such children, encourage them to stay in school clubs rather than wander the streets where they invite other children, similarly placed, to 'come and have a game in our flat'. Worried neighbours have sometimes visited me to complain of noisy, uncontrolled behaviour which they are anxious not to report to the parents of the children concerned for fear of causing trouble. But we know only too well the inevitable pattern that will develop if nothing is done and by a combination of gentle domestic pressure and our own social provision we do our best to see the child is not left too much to his own lonely devices.

We are, however, members of the teaching profession and it is expected of us to justify our organization on grounds which are first and foremost educational. In bringing together out of school, boys and girls of all ages and intelligence ranges we provide opportunities for them to learn, not only about things, but about each other, to respect qualities and talents and skills which are admirable and to condemn, perhaps while tolerating, those which are not; to see the purpose of responsibility and how and why and by whom it is assumed; to develop confidence in their own ability to take over and plan and organize. Gradually but surely these comprehensive school children are bringing themselves into the main stream of English educational life. Our boys and girls know that at schools judged by the public to be good ones, pupils have debating societies, orchestras, their own newspaper—so do we. They play rugby, chess and tennis—so do we. They perform plays, fence, have cross-country runs—so do we. And before we are condemned for encouraging such apparent snobbishness I will admit that my staff and I have enjoyed the unpretentious and even touching pride

slices, the Stoke Newington children sang 'Happy Birthday'. Perhaps I ought to add here that my pupils have greeted with equal cordiality school parties from Germany and delegations of Russian educationists!

Almost all schools have extra-curricular activities of some sort or another. We have very many. There are a number of reasons for this. *Four are of particular importance.*

An early evening walk round most heavily populated London boroughs, especially those where there has been a great deal of municipal housing development, will show thousands of children playing aimlessly on the pavements. Later the young wage-earners come on to the streets, collecting in groups at corners, wandering into the pin-table saloons or dance-halls. Pre-service units, youth clubs where the leader has captured the imagination of the adolescent population, or, in our area, the centres run by the Jewish people, cater for the minority, but it is still the majority who seem unable to cope with leisure time. They have no constructive hobbies, are too blasé in this modern age to see the point of spending an evening in a musty room behind a church, often poorly equipped and 'with strings attached'. This especially applies to youngsters who have grown used to the excellent facilities in new schools. Unfortunately, too frequently the very natural and desirable thirst for adventure is partly satisfied by the acquisition of a flick knife or some knuckledusters. Then an unlucky fight breaks out, sometimes after a visit to a public house or dance hall and many a fundamentally decent boy finds himself in the courts, the prisons or even on the scaffold itself.

We are trying to give all our children a taste for creative, constructive interests and hobbies both indoor and outdoor which they will take away with them when school days are over and use to enrich their leisure hours. All the clubs and activities we organize at Woodberry Down, if pursued by our old scholars in their middle and late teens, could bring a new birth of intellectual, cultural and social life to the neighbourhood. But how and where this would come about are questions we cannot answer. I will return to this point again.

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

There are no girls in the Chess Club—the only one who investigated membership withdrew after one attendance! The Photographic Club reports a membership of twenty-seven boys and one girl. The club has greater appeal to juniors of all forms, who are willing to 'do' for themselves. Craft clubs had a combined membership in 1958 of more than eighty boys reflecting a complete spread of ability from the second to the sixth years. The boys' Swimming Club, forty strong, shows a preponderance of boys in lower ability ranges, for recreational swimming always attracts the slower boys who have not developed the co-operation needed for team games. The Drama Clubs have a membership of nearly a hundred boys and girls covering the whole ability and age range and can claim as constant support from some of our retarded children as from a number of upper sixth formers proceeding to university and training college. Membership of the Geography Club tends to fluctuate, but I am told that there is a hard core of second year boys and fourth year girls, that there are insufficient members from the lower streams, although the range of ability is fairly wide and that there is a slight and unexplained predominance of girls, especially in officers of the club and committee representatives. The Christian Fellowship also reports a tendency for membership to show a majority of girls and children of the lower ability ranges. The purpose of the meetings varies. This club aims to provide a meeting point for practising Christians, to provide a place where general ideas of religion and philosophy may be discussed and to develop Christian ideals of fellowship and responsibility. In 1958 a report gave me this information:

The Fellowship has appealed to ability groups according to particular meetings—some aimed at a simple level, some bearing in mind more intellectual needs. We have often had Jewish children attending meetings with great interest.

It is, by the way, customary for Christian children to join the audience at Jewish plays or dancing displays celebrating particular religious occasions such as Chanukah.

The press remarks from time to time that Woodberry Down

of our children who, nerving themselves to speak publicly, welcoming pupils from established grammar schools to tournaments or matches, resplendent in white outfits for cricket or tennis, are striving to bridge the artificial gaps which have developed and widened since it was decided that there are born in Britain three types of children needing three types of educational systems which have tended to produce three patterns of social behaviour.

Finally there is the inestimable value to teachers themselves of meeting children outside the more formal atmosphere of the classroom. Not only do they then become aware of the full extent of their responsibilities in guiding the full development of children with social backgrounds often quite alien to their own experiences, but they can keep in touch with the thought processes, the emotional sympathies, the prejudices of the new generation and without this knowledge, acquired only when the relationship between teacher and pupil is confident and uninhibited, no masters or mistresses can reach their full stature in our vital and exacting profession.

It would not be true to say every club or activity attracts a cross-section of our pupils in age and ability, although the majority tend to do so. Some appear to encourage boys and girls with specific interests or talents. For instance the 1958 report of the mistress who unobtrusively supervises the Debating Society says:

This club naturally attracts mainly those who develop academic ability. Membership is entirely unrestricted, however; no one is either refused or urged to join. So far the policy has been merely to allow membership to grow naturally and then to build up some sort of standard. It is very much a 'social' club for its thirty plus members.

The school newspaper, *The Griffin*, has children from every form involved in its production and sales. The account of the Chess Club, which in 1958 had eighty members, states:

No deliberate differentiation is made between pupils according to age and/or ability but the better players choose, naturally, to play more with others of equal talent. School and House teams tend to be drawn from the more able boys.

Growing into a Community



THIS CONCLUDING CHAPTER still tells the beginning of a story. The impact of Woodberry Down and the comprehensive principle of education on the children and the community from which they are drawn cannot be judged accurately for some years and even then the task of summing up and announcing the verdict should not be undertaken by the interested parties—last of all perhaps by a headmistress convinced before the experiment began that only through such a system of organization can the policy of secondary education for all be honestly implemented.

And these are early days; we have still much to learn. But three and a half years, while it may constitute a short time in the history of English education or indeed in the existence of a particular school, is a very long time in the secondary life of a child. For those who leave at fifteen years of age it can be the total experience; for those staying on in the sixth form this period is half the time during which primary school juniors grow to mature young men and women. Much has happened and is happening to our pupils which indicates the sort of progress that is being made in our new type of secondary school and there are enough pointers, both educational and social, to establish certain trends and to pin-point the most obvious developments. This I have tried to do.

Inside the school then, a pattern is emerging. But what about the basic principle of the neighbourhood school? Are we gaining

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

cost the ratepayers nearly a million pounds. Our clubs cost them very little indeed. Almost all the excellent equipment we have bought, valued at some five hundred pounds over three years, has been paid for by our school fund raised by pupils, staff and parents, and teachers give their time voluntarily to this extension of their normal duties.

Children leaving Woodberry Down will wish to continue the interests and activities we have encouraged them to develop (as extended education) as part of their social training and as a means of using leisure time constructively, creatively and in a manner which is both personally satisfying and right for the community. But where can they do this? Junior Technical Institutes cater admirably for those who wish to continue their studies (and through social meetings our pupils are encouraged to enrol before they leave school). Such recreational clubs as exist in our immediate neighbourhood have a limited contribution to make, but by and large the hobbies and special interests, particularly those dependent on expensive equipment, are likely to lapse. My staff is now fully extended in its present many and varied contributions over and above those which I have, as a headmistress, the right to expect from the least co-operative of teachers. Even the occasional meetings of an Old Scholars' Association presents difficulties, for this means yet another evening when I and house masters and house mistresses need to be on the premises until ten or eleven o'clock.

Masters and mistresses, aware of the needs of these young people, who would be prepared and interested to invite pupils who have left the school to return in the evenings and continue their clubs and activities (providing accommodation could be available in our already heavily used buildings) are unfortunately too often compelled to supplement their salaries either by teaching in the evening institutes or by taking on other paid employment, not always indeed of an educational nature. It is not easy to reconcile a sense of vocation with the *Burnham* Scale but many children in Stoke Newington are living the fuller, richer life anticipated by the comprehensive principle because so many of my staff insist on trying to do it!

GROWING INTO A COMMUNITY

rumour and eventually it reaches me, either through a visit from a local reporter or from a sensible parent. Unfortunately a public denial only serves to spread the story and we try to use the good offices of loyal mothers, fathers and other friends of the school in ensuring that the truth becomes known. It is a very disquieting fact that very often the same unpleasant story circulates simultaneously in the areas of a number of comprehensive schools. We hope that our community will learn to react in the classic and traditional manner to the cry of 'Wolf!'

Official functions and Open Days when the buildings, staff and children are 'on show' to the neighbourhood serve a useful purpose in developing local pride in 'our own school', as indeed do the announcements of achievements academic or athletic. Understanding journalists who are genuinely interested in school children and their activities make lively copy of the many events taking place each term, and so give further balanced information in our local press to the mothers and fathers who have still to make a decision on secondary education.

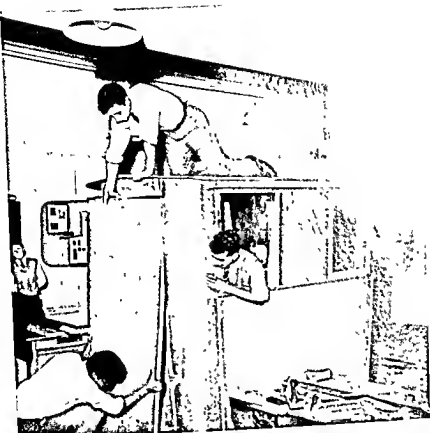
Meanwhile, inside the school the children are making their little personal world. The pictures they paint are framed on the walls of rooms and corridors; their efforts at pottery and sculpture are on display brightening up dull corners; large murals, combined efforts of eager groups, appear in all parts of the buildings. Boxes are made, painted and brought into classrooms so that plants and flowers can be grown. Notice-boards are never sufficient for some forms whose interests are demonstrated by accounts of the latest nuclear tests pinned side by side with soccer notes and the newest photograph of Private Presley. In the woodwork shops model rooms are being built and the furniture and fittings made by the boys. The prefects have replanned their room, papered the walls, made it into a sitting-room. The biology pond teems with newts and tadpoles; in the summer the garden and roof are colourful with plants all belonging to someone; there are guinea pigs, rats, hamsters and the school cat Posy all providing progeny which must now bring joy to the hearts of pupils, and sometimes despair to the hearts of parents, in almost every street in our area. The

or losing ground in the estimation of the adult population and particularly the parents who will decide whether or not the school can ever fulfil its intended function?

I remember being told by a wise history teacher many years ago when as a schoolgirl I wrote 'and so he decided either to be a saint or a dictator', that no one can call a state or condition into being by assuming it exists. Woodberry Down, the community school in intention, is not yet the community school in fact and wishing cannot make it so. Nor would any form of compulsion or restriction of parental choice bring it about and indeed such a policy would not be contemplated by our authority. It will come if and when all people in our defined area believe that this school does answer fully and wisely the educational and social needs of all the eleven-year-old children who are moving up from the primary schools. The people are still making up their minds.

Nothing the London County Council can say, nothing my staff and I can say matters as much as 'what the thoughtful parents themselves see. The way our boys and girls behave on the buses and in the streets, their appearance, their voices—these are the things noticed and commented on first. Only one other factor, which I will discuss more fully later, is of comparable significance, and that is the degree of co-operation we can establish with the neighbouring primary school head teacher, whose opinions can make or break us. Very important too is the general impression of the school and what it is doing passed on to interested listeners by mothers and fathers of children already on our roll. This fund of information, sometimes reliable, occasionally inaccurate, is augmented by the opinions of other local people who are concerned with our work. Nurses, welfare workers, employers who visit us, the local women who cook our lunches or clean our floors all have a point of view to express about what is really happening here, and all are contributing to the census of opinion developing in the neighbourhood.

Occasionally a particularly vicious and completely unfounded story bursts like a bombshell in the district. People whisper in shops, anxious mothers seek others who can refute or confirm the



15. Making a Tuck-shop—Club Activity

large school which, it has been suggested, was bound to be an impersonal place, is becoming just the reverse, a very personal home to the boys and girls of the neighbourhood.

The pattern of imposed order and discipline, unfamiliar to many children, which we were convinced was necessary in 1955 in order to establish both educational and social standards is changing into a more easy, natural self-discipline. Pupils are working harder, achieving more with less pressure from the staff. The very large majority of children support their head boy and girl, the school games captains and prefects. Strangely enough it is more often than not the occasional parent, who objects to the authority which is now assumed by tried and trusted senior boys and girls, but that too is the result of the new order and is another example of the necessity of keeping mothers and fathers informed of the policy of, and procedure in, the school. House captains and form captains, club committees, and the School Council are learning how to accept responsibility so that they can take more part in planning their school lives.

Articles in the school newspaper reflect the many and vigorous interests of the children. Reporters, taking their jobs very seriously, compete for 'scoops' in the best Fleet Street tradition. On 11 October 1956 the front page read: 'Ian Johnson and Keith Miller talk to *The Griffin* in an exclusive interview with our staff reporter Valerie Sealey.' Valerie, to the great dismay of the male reporters, had by-passed autograph hunters and had obtained her story from the Australian cricket captain and vice-captain in their hotel rooms. It made very interesting reading.

The Griffin, combining factual reporting of events with humorous articles, cartoons and advertisements, claims its contributors, editors, printers, sales staff and clients from every part of the school. Each publication date is eagerly awaited and as hundreds of children sit in the playgrounds reading their own paper the corporate spirit is very obvious.

At full assemblies when all our pupils meet together and the occasion is used either to congratulate individuals on their achievements or to praise the whole school for a successful combined effort

GROWING INTO A COMMUNITY

or even to issue reprimands when they are necessary, the unity of the children, their sense of community is again remarkable. And yet remarkable is probably the wrong word, for these children who have never known, or were removed early from segregated schools, find living together through their adolescent years as natural as living together through their infant years. It is many of us teachers used to the artificial divisions of the tripartite system who, I must confess, sometimes express surprise at what is normal and even seek to analyse the reasons why children who, told firmly by us when they are eleven years of age that there is no reason why they should be separated and labelled accept this statement as logical and true and think and feel accordingly. A new attitude of mind is developing among these boys and girls which is difficult for many people, even those whose life is in the world of education, to understand. Visitors come and ask what they consider relevant questions—questions which pre-suppose the existence of the evils of the old system of segregating, questions which are by us no longer asked nor can sensibly be answered in our school, questions which we sadly admit often show that even our professional colleagues have no conception of the fundamental nature of the comprehensive ideal. 'Do the secondary moderns do algebra?' 'Have the grammar streams time for art and drama?' 'Surely they don't all mix!' And to answer them it is necessary to go back to basic principles and explain all over again what we are trying to do and why the questions have no validity. The children have adopted the new way of life while the adult world still discusses whether it is possible.

These pupils of ours make good ambassadors to the territory where the school is seeking to establish itself. Each year, when the result of the Junior Leaving Examination is announced, they come to see me, boys and girls who themselves may have been classified as suitable for secondary modern or central education and announce with pride that a brother or sister or cousin or friend who 'has won a grammar place' (for the terminology of the neighbourhood persists) is going to try to obtain admission to Woodberry Down. 'Mum says I'm doing so well that she's sure my sister will



16. A group of Sixth-formers in the Playground

GROWING INTO A COMMUNITY

authorities' policy to one who is not so keen could provide some interesting information. When comprehensive headmasters and headmistresses meet in conference this disturbing item seldom eludes the agenda.

It is probably unnecessary to stress that there is no question of the right of primary head teachers to give advice which they consider compatible with their terms of employment and professional consciences, but it is equally necessary for the general public waiting to estimate the degree of success of the comprehensive school to realize that the prejudice against it, especially when it comes from inside our profession, can raise obstacles which slow down the sound establishment and development of the system. And our teachers too become impatient when their own faith, idealism, determination and sheer hard work are just not enough to win for them the support which will bring about the conditions under which the school can reach its full stature.

There are other compensations. As headmistress of Woodberry Down I have been strengthened in my convictions again and again by the growing confidence and appreciation of the parents of my pupils. Our third Careers Convention held last week, in May 1959, was by far the most successful of the three we have held. Not only did the mothers and fathers of our third-year pupils demonstrate most clearly by their questions and decisions that our plan to give a full, liberal education to all children is beginning to be widely understood and appreciated, but in the many letters which I have since received there is encouragement and pride.

The father of a child who came to us with a grammar selection wrote in typical fashion:

Because we have always held very firm opinions on the system of Comprehensive education, we had no hesitation about where Frances should go after being successful in her eleven plus examination. The progress that she has shown in her studies has always made us feel that the choice was a correct one. The evening that we spent at school on Wednesday very finally underlined for us all our hopes, both for our children and for the future education of all children.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

he all right here' or 'My cousin has been round the school with me and he's told my uncle and aunt that he doesn't want to go anywhere else', they say. Each announcement of a place gained by a pupil at university or training college increases the confidence developing in the neighbourhood in our ability to do educational justice to the brightest boys and girls.

In 1958 we were able to fill the percentage of places we consider correct for the most able children with those who obtained the 'Higher Academic' selection and opted for Woodberry Down as their 'first choice' school. Some of these children, however, still came well outside the catchment area. This year I have opened our doors on a number of occasions to parents of ten- and eleven-year-old children living in our immediate locality so that they could see what is being done and ask me questions on organization or any problems which might be affecting their decisions on the choice of secondary education. We have reason to believe that the catchment area will this year give us more of its ablest children and so send less away from the community school. Much still depends on the attitude of the head teachers of the primary pupils who advise parents on the choice of suitable secondary schools. All over London and wherever the comprehensive system is operating we who are in it know that a junior school headmistress or headmaster who collects 'grammar' admissions as an Indian collects scalps has the influence to channelize all the brightest children away from us; even parents who have watched one of our schools carefully and have almost decided to select it for their children prove themselves, naturally enough, very susceptible to alternative suggestions when it comes from a trusted member of the teaching profession. Other heads who wish to be co-operative do their best to send us a fair share of the ablest boys and girls along with those of average or poor ability. And in case this statement be considered an exaggeration of the power of my primary school colleagues I can only suggest that a comparison between the number of 'Grammar' children applying to come to a comprehensive school from the same primary school in two consecutive years when there has been a change from a head teacher who intends to operate his

pound school. And the parents went for me with the zest and zeal and energy of religious converts to hammer home their points, that they thought comprehensive schools like this one, Woodberry Down, near Manor House Station, the answer to most if not all educational problems.

This discerning journalist was right. The majority of these mothers and fathers are converts—converted, as they all stated, to a belief in the new system of secondary education after watching the progress of their sons and daughters. We continue optimistically to offer similar facilities to all non-believers in the neighbourhood hoping that one day the school which rejects no child in its area will be rejected by none of the children.

As our fourth year ends my assigned staff stands firm. The one member leaving us is going on to a post of further responsibility in another comprehensive school. In September 1959 the fifth year of our existence begins and the story of Woodberry Down continues. It is not one of 'roses, roses all the way'. For every difficulty we have overcome another confronts us, for every problem we have solved another presents itself. But of this we are sure. If we keep our faith whole, our eyes keen and our vision wide the little history of this school and others like it will become part of a greater and nobler story of England's struggle to give educational fulfilment to all her children.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

It may not be fully realized by the L.C.C. Education authorities and possibly by yourself and staff that we as parents are very proud of our school and hold it in very high esteem.

Our parents' association 'The Friends of Woodberry Down' is doing excellent work for us in the neighbourhood in bringing together mothers and fathers who are prepared to work together for the benefit of the school. Monthly dances and socials are organized by the committee, which includes old scholars and some local people who, strangely enough, have no children at Woodberry Down but want to be 'Friends'. An Autumn Fair last year raised nearly a hundred and fifty pounds which was used to provide the school with a printing press and various cups to be awarded to pupils for games, athletics and public service. The 'Friends' also help staff and pupils to run an annual jumble sale which provides us each year with an average of a further hundred and fifty pounds for the school fund, while at our public functions they again join with house-craft teachers and senior girls in providing refreshments. Such co-operation between school and home is inevitably valuable to both, for it strengthens the bonds which encourage the development of a harmonious and healthy community spirit. When misunderstandings concerning us circulate, the 'Friends' can help explain away the false impressions; when they have insufficient information to do this they carry out my wishes and persuade the inquiring parent to come and see me.

Recently on the morning following such a chat in the local, a father rang and asked to make an appointment to see me. I offered him a choice of times—dinner-hour or evening.

'No,' he said, 'I can't manage that. How about eleven o'clock Sunday morning?'

My hours of attendance at school had been somewhat exaggerated by a well-meaning 'Friend'.

The national press has commented on the attitude of the parents of our children. On 20 June 1958 a reporter of the *Evening Standard* wrote:

I stood with a group of parents on the steps of the million-

Index

- academic attainment, 60-61
- Activities and Amenities Allowance, 147-8
- administrative staff, 16
- admittance, original, 19-20
- age group assessment, 113-14
- aims, of educational plan, 45-46
- America, *see* U.S.A.
- Aristotle, 89
- art, 77-78
- Assistant Masters, Incorporated Association of, 7
- At Homes, 92
- Bibby, Dr Cyril, 69
- building, description of, 14-15
- caning, 38, 97
- capitation allowance, 30-31
- Care Committee, 98
- careers, envisaged by sixth-formers, 130
- Careers Convention, 55, 110 ff.
- catchment area, 17, 162
- Certificate of Education, 56, 65, 74, 118
- clubs, 94, 149-51
- commerce, 74-75
- competitiveness, 100-1
- comprehensive, origin of term, 7-8
- comprehensive school, basic case for, 8-10; number of, 11
- corporal punishment, *see* caning
- courses, 52-53
- curriculum, 52, 54, 56-57, 61 ff.
- deputy headmaster, 26
- diary, house, 100
- dining-hall, 15
- dinner, *see* meals
- discipline, 160
- Dolin, Anton, 76
- drama, 28, 80-82; festival, 76
- Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, 146-7
- Durham County Council, 10
- Education Act (1944), 3, 8
- eleven-plus tests, 4; pre-1944, 2
- English, 63-64
- failures, 136-8
- first-year course, 52
- foreign travel, 140 ff.
- form group assessment, 114
- forms, 51
- furniture, 29-30
- geography, 67
- grading, 49 ff.
- grammar schools, 3, 6
- Griffin, The*, 160
- headmistress, access to, 138-9
- history, 65-67
- homework, 24
- house system, 26-27, 58, 90 ff.
- housecraft, 73-74
- Hunt, Sir John, 146
- intake, early, 20-21
- Italy, 140
- Jeffery, Dr G. B., 25, 26
- journalists, 32-33, 41
- journeys, school, 140 ff.
- Kussaf, David, 76
- Labour Party Conference, 7
- languages, 70-71

INDEX

- latch-key children, 153
- leisure activities, 152
- litter, 43
- local conditions, 17-18
- London County Council, 10, 15
- lost property, 42
- lunch-hour, 40-41

- mathematics, 64
- meals, school, 93-94
- meetings, preliminary, 23
- mixed ability, 49 ff., 76 ff.
- modern school, 3, 9, 10
- monitors, 93
- motto, 18
- multiple bias schools, 7
- multilateral school, 7-8
- music, 79-80

- National Union of Teachers, 7
- needlework, 74
- newspaper, school, 160
- note-taking, 64

- opening of school, 32 ff.
- opportunity, equality of, 9-11, 49

- parents' association, 164
- part-time teachers, 77
- physical education, 82-85
- primary schools, 3; co-operation with, 158, 162
- problems, children's, 97-98
- public address system, 43

- questionnaires, 96, 103-8

- record, academic, 113; aptitude and attitude, 96, 108-9; individual, 102
- recreational evening, 94

- religion, 17-18, 52
- religious education, 86-89
- retarded children, 53-54

- scholarships, pre-War, 2
- school-keeper, 28-29
- school, inter-War, 1
- science, 68
- secondary school, use of term, 3
- security, 53
- services, house, 94
- setting, 49
- sex education, 68-70
- singing, 79
- social life, 26-27
- socialism, 9
- staff selection, 25-28
- 'staying on', 44-45, 58, 112 ff.
- streaming, 49
- subjects, variety of, 56-57

- technical studies, 71-72
- technology, 57
- 'Teddy boys' and 'girls', 36-37
- theatre visits, 148
- Toye, Wendy, 76
- Trades Union Congress, 7
- tripartitism, 7, 10

- uniform, 19, 23-24, 39-40
- unity, social, 8
- U.S.A., 50
- U.S.S.R., 50

- visits, educational, 147-8

- Wilkinson, Ellen, 8
- work schemes, *see* curriculum
- worship, *see* religious instruction
- written work, 64

students abroad but also to the nationals who return with American degrees. For example, in the Social Science Research Council's study of the readjustment problems of returned students, the research workers for Sweden, Mexico, and Japan all reported the difficulties met by returning nationals in securing official recognition for their American studies. American institutions of higher learning would render an important service by suggesting how best to provide a central service for current and accurate information on accreditation both in this country and abroad.

Academic Performance

Whatever complexities may exist in the selection, placement, and academic status of foreign students entering the American educational system, their academic performance is presumably the final test of the efficacy of these procedural matters and of the American system of teaching. Yet, any discussion of the academic achievement of foreign students is fraught with difficulties. Can academic achievement be examined "objectively" in terms of a quantitative study of grade records? If so, how does one allow for the vastly different standards between American academic institutions or even between instructors within institutions? It is freely admitted that instructors vary considerably in the leniency they show individual foreign students, not only in grading but also in the amount of personal effort they make to carry foreign students who are handicapped in preparatory training, language, "intelligence," or social adjustment. Furthermore, how does one select an American control group so that a comparison can be made between American and foreign students?

Recent studies of foreign student grades do not meet all of these points but do serve to cast some preliminary light on the academic records of students from abroad.

Of 633 Department of State affiliated students 37 percent reported an average grade of A; 57 percent reported an average

grade of B; and only 6 percent reported an average grade of C or below.¹⁰ When these grades are compared with those in a study by the Association of Graduate Schools,¹¹ one might conclude that government-affiliated students are more carefully selected for scholastic ability than is the average foreign student in the United States. However, the majority of government-affiliated students are at the graduate level. A grade of C in many graduate schools is considered a serious warning to advanced students and is given more sparingly than on the undergraduate level. One is therefore somewhat at loss to know how to evaluate comparatively the two available studies.

Turning now to the study by the Association of Graduate Schools, their findings can be summarized as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
SCHOLASTIC RECORDS OF FOREIGN STUDENTS BY
MAJOR WORLD REGIONS *

| AREA | ABOVE AVERAGE | | BELOW AVERAGE | | TOTAL NO. OF CASES SPECIFIED |
|-------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| | No. | Percent | No. | Percent | |
| Europe..... | 213 | 44 | 88 | 20 | 437 |
| Far East..... | 314 | 32 | 221 | 24 | 902 |
| Near East..... | 118 | 38 | 73 | 24 | 308 |
| Latin America.... | 43 | 22 | 68 | 37 | 182 |
| Total..... | 688 | 38 | 430 | 24 | 1,829 |

* Africa and the British Commonwealth students are each omitted, for different reasons

When one considers these figures by countries, there are eleven out of fifty-four whose student population is 30 percent

¹⁰ Bureau of Social Science Research, American University, *Foreign Exchange Students Review Their Stay in the United States: An Analysis of Second Semester Reports, Academic Year 1951-52*, prepared for the Evaluation Staff, International Educational Exchange Service, Dept. of State, August 1953 (Mimeographed), p. 10.

¹¹ Association of Graduate Schools, *Report of the Committee on Problems of Foreign Students, 1953* (Mimeographed).

or more below average. As might be expected from the foregoing table, most of these countries are in the Far Eastern or Latin-American regions. One astonishing exception is Norway with a representation of twenty-six students in the sample, of whom nine, or 35 percent, are reported as below average. When one considers Europe as a whole, it is also astonishing to find 20 percent rated as below average in view of the "advanced" educational systems of Europe, the greater ease in evaluating their past records and their institutions, and the larger numbers of applicants that are available from which to select. Even though the European students may have better academic records than the usual American student, the number of them who are "below average" needs explanation in view of what is presumably more critical screening. Possibly, European students may be admitted who cannot measure up to home standards; or they may be located in institutions in this country whose performance requirements are the most rigorous. It may be that less leniency in grading is evinced toward European students than toward more "exotic" students.

In any event, the difficulty of an objective study of foreign students' academic records raises as many questions as it resolves. Only when we have some comparison with a carefully matched American control group will it be possible to know whether the frequently voiced faculty complaints about the "quality" of foreign students are really valid.

Certificates

Whatever the objective evidence of academic achievement, the sense of personal accomplishment felt by foreign students in their academic studies in this country may have equal or even greater importance. This raises the question of certificates for foreign students who have had a constructive learning experience but who may not have completed work for a degree. This

is a subject on which there is a wide variety of both opinion and practice. Most foreign student advisers recognize the personal and professional importance attached by many nationals to some more or less "honorific" statement of their educational experience in this country. The informal photostatic transcript of record does not satisfy the desire for a "symbolic" document.

In some colleges and universities documents whose design resembles a diploma for a degree are given to foreign students. The explicit intention is to provide them with a statement that can be displayed. On other campuses a less pretentious document serves the purpose. In many other institutions no concessions are made to the desire of foreign students for formal recognition of nondegree work. Those who defend the award of pretentious documents generally place primary value on satisfying the aspirations of individual foreign students in the interest of painless interpersonal relations with them. They point to the European custom of issuing certificates for a variety of minor educational activities and play down the possibility or the importance of having such documents misused or misinterpreted in other countries. However, the proponents of certificates as a rule do not advocate their being cheapened and would not have them presented to those who have frankly loafed through their work. There is no intention of providing foreign students with a second-class degree. Those who oppose the issuance of such certificates generally place primary value on some "absolute" standard of academic achievement and the reputation of American education abroad. It is also the feeling of these persons that certificates tend to detract from the satisfaction of those who have earned full degrees. Whatever virtues may attach to one or another of various positions on this issue, there would be considerable value in a certain uniformity of practice. The Association of American Universities or some comparable group should address itself to this subject. It is not a matter which foreign student advisers can resolve.

Administrative Support of Foreign Students on American Campuses

The presence of foreign students on American campuses has raised considerations ranging from the broad values inherent in the American educational system to the minutiae of evaluating foreign credits. One of the greatest contributions made by our foreign guests to academic institutions *qua* institutions may be precisely in the kind of self-scrutiny their presence has stimulated among the more thoughtful administrators and educators.

On the other hand, the administrative aid given to foreign students by American educational institutions has also been impressive. The following statement was inserted in the record of a Senate subcommittee hearing in reply to queries by Senator Fulbright on university cooperation in foreign student programs.

(1) Institutions of higher learning in the United States annually provide partial or full maintenance for approximately three-fourths of the foreign nationals who are studying in this country and financial support for more than one-half of the research scholars and visiting lecturers under the program administered by the Department (of State).

(2) Faculty members on more than 1,000 American campuses serve voluntarily as Fulbright program advisers and are assisted by committees established by the colleges for the preliminary screening of American student applicants. . . .

(3) Approximately 1,000 American universities have appointed foreign student advisers. . . .

(4) Faculty members of 62 American universities voluntarily serve on 47 selection committees . . . for lecturing and research awards.

(5) Continuing hospitality is offered . . . to all types of foreign grantees. . . .¹²

Saturation Points.—This list of the demands that international study places on educational institutions and their faculties is particularly impressive when one considers the heavy teaching

¹² U.S. Congress, Senate, *Overseas Information Programs of the United States*, 82nd Cong., 2nd Sess., Nov. 20-21, 1952 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), p. 183.

and committee load already carried by most faculty members in the majority of institutions. It is equally impressive when one considers the varied and legitimate demands placed on limited university budgets.

It is not astonishing therefore that opinions have been voiced against any enlargement of the foreign student load by many faculty members. The complaints, when they occur, however, seem leveled primarily not at the load of normally enrolled foreign students but rather at the temporary visitors who may arrive on short notice, who may not arrive on schedule, or who may not arrive at all after preparations have been made to receive them. *Other than the demand on time, there is also the financial drain that unavoidable hospitality entails. If the sources of these complaints are really with the visitor programs rather than with the regularly enrolled students, it would appear that the difficulty lies in part with the resource lists used by centralized program planners and the attraction exercised by distinguished personalities and institutions not only on planners but perhaps more importantly on the visitors themselves.*

When one examines the question of the regularly enrolled foreign students, even the institutions with the largest percentage of foreign students do not appear overburdened compared to European institutions (see pages 28-30, and Appendix A). Therefore, from various college administrators, in contrast to the teaching staff, one hears expressed most frequently the desire for more foreign students. *Only a few of the graduate and internationally known institutions voice the viewpoint that their institution cannot absorb additional numbers of foreign students.*¹² Generally, the smaller, more remote, or less-developed undergraduate schools seem to want more foreign students than they can get. Occasionally, this may reflect a financial concern. *To hard-pressed administrators foreign students may appear as another source of enrollment fees. This is*

¹² For details see Appendix D.

not necessarily an illegitimate position, but it does not *per se* recommend the institutions. With the expected influx of American students which is now beginning, this situation will change radically and perhaps the change will be to the disadvantage of foreign applicants.

Least desirable are those rare proprietary schools that deliberately recruit foreign students for the financial returns they entail. Usually such schools do not possess the most desirable academic standards and their exploitive intent rarely escapes the notice of foreign students or reputable placement officers. At best, they may provide a steppingstone to better schools for academically able and economically self-sustaining students whose secondary training was inadequate. Naturally, information on the philosophy and practices of this marginal group of schools is not easily obtained. It does appear, however, that students from Latin-American and African countries are most frequently the targets of such institutions.

The opposite viewpoint of certain institutions that a saturation point in foreign students has been reached may reflect a series of managerial and educational problems. If the institution provides the foreign student with particular and concerned counseling, if its laboratories and other facilities are already heavily burdened, if educational privileges are granted, if personal relations are encouraged between students and teaching staff, and if nonnationals are treated as a "special problem," then undoubtedly the additional time and expense involved may tax an institution and its staff. Administratively, the additional burden of admission procedures, wise academic counseling, and governmental regulations and reports cannot be escaped. Nor is the appointment of a foreign student adviser with either direct additional cost to a university budget or indirect cost through loss of teaching time the sole answer.

There are a certain number of educational institutions in which there is general agreement that they have reached a saturation

point in foreign student enrollment. Some institutions have an explicit 10 percent quota for foreign students. Others have a tacit quota policy. Some state-supported institutions feel that even the discussion of a quota might arouse certain elements in state legislatures to oppose the spending of any state funds for the education of foreigners. Given the great heterogeneity of American educational institutions, it is clear that no generalization is possible on what constitutes saturation and wise policies toward it. However, for the country as a whole and in purely quantitative terms, the number of foreign students in the United States cannot be considered at a saturation point with the possible exception of certain technical or professional schools, such as those in medicine. This appears to be true, particularly in view of the services generally accorded our own students and of additional services we feel called upon to give students from abroad. It is possible, however, that from the point of view of high quality (for example, good placement, work appropriate to the student, and so forth), the capacity to absorb more foreign students is not so great as our large and diffuse educational resources might at first imply.

For any particular institution, a saturation point is a function of its educational philosophy in general, of its counseling policies in particular, of the demands made by external agencies—such as the Department of State and its agents, like the Institute of International Education—of its financial resources, of its size and location, of the level of its teaching, and of a dozen other factors particular to each institution. Every institution would have to scrutinize its own situation with objectivity and integrity to reach any judicious conclusions on this score. It would have to consider the needs of foreign students as seriously as it considers its own self-interests. The mere willingness to accept foreign students does not necessarily assure an institution's capacity to handle them competently.

Affiliation

The capacity of an educational institution to provide foreign students with competent and relevant educational experience leads into another frequently debated subject, namely, "affiliation." Affiliation is the term generally used for a more or less intimate exchange relationship between an American college and a foreign counterpart. It is a term generally deemed to be less condescending than "adoption" and to represent in fact also a mutuality and reciprocity not generally implied by the word "adoption."

Closely allied to formal affiliation between American and foreign institutions is the question of deliberate or accidental specializations in certain regional or national groups. The arguments most frequently marshaled in favor of affiliation and to a lesser degree in favor of regional or national specializations are as follows.

First, a faculty that has a competent grasp of the conditions and problems of another area can usually teach the students from that area in terms that are more meaningful and relevant. For example, if the students are accustomed to theoretical rather than practical teaching, laboratory work can be especially designed to compensate for the lack of earlier training in manual dexterity and mechanical skills. Second, a prolonged interest in and knowledge of a given country generally facilitates warmer and more intimate personal contacts between American and foreign personnel. Third, as knowledge develops in the American institution of conditions in a particular country, more reliable selection is possible both because returned graduates can assist in the selection abroad and because personal judgments are possible concerning the reliability of overseas sponsors. Fourth, and for the same reasons, accreditation is facilitated and more accurately achieved. Fifth, upon return, a group of graduates from the same American institution will have common ties, can

more easily understand each other, and will presumably have greater influence in their home country.

Those who argue against affiliation or regional specialization raise the following points: First, on large campuses or in big departments the great variety of area interests represented in the faculty neither should nor could appropriately be restricted or channeled. Second, on small campuses concentration on one or two national groups deprives these nationals as well as American students of the advantages of a broad international atmosphere. Third, national concentrations foster national cliques and reduce the opportunities for contact with American life. Fourth, in small American communities concentrations of particular national groups may give rise to negative reactions and the creation of prejudiced judgments.

These various viewpoints suggest that affiliation may be advantageous for certain professional and technical schools such as those in medicine or agriculture within large universities; that affiliations are usually possible, if at all, only between quite limited segments of graduate faculties in the social disciplines and the humanities; that affiliation for such faculties is probably most advantageous if there is a pre-existing area program for both research and teaching such as Cornell's Southeast Asia program; and that regional specialization or affiliation in general is unwanted and undesirable for undergraduate institutions of whatever size and for isolated professional and technical schools.

Predeparture Briefing

A final topic may deserve mention in a general consideration of policies and practices respecting foreign students on American campuses. This is the subject variously called predeparture briefing, debriefing, or reorientation. It is a subject in which there is a new and growing interest in the foreign student field but which has a longer and more entrenched role in the trainee

and leader-technician field. If the postulated predeparture phase of adjustment is valid, then it would appear that the period of preparation for return to the homeland is indeed a crucial and sensitive one for many individuals. In the experiments so far carried out along these lines varying philosophies have either implicitly or explicitly prevailed.

In some instances stress has been laid on preparing students to consider clearly and practically the roles they may anticipate assuming on their return. The experiment at William and Mary College in 1953, where a group of ten French normal school students were given a week to consider their future activities back in France and where discussions were held primarily in French, belongs to this category. The intent was predominantly reorientation to France.

In other cases brief exit interviews are held on an individual or small-group basis in order to solicit frank and constructive opinions about the experiences encountered during the sojourn in the United States. The intent primarily is to evaluate the planning and execution of a program. In a sense this type of terminal interviewing can be designated as debriefing or as evaluation.

In still other cases the intent of terminal sessions, whether in groups or individually, is to provide an opportunity for foreign students to reappraise and to digest the American experience. Inevitably, certain individuals leave the United States with distressing or puzzling questions still ranking in their minds. A final opportunity to bring them to light and discuss them frankly, particularly with fellow-foreign students or fellow-nationals, is considered constructive.

Lastly, there are some individuals who view terminal services and opportunities in terms of a final gesture of courtesy and good will to students, some of whom may be leaving this country with a sense of being sent rather unceremoniously on their way.

Of course, no watertight line can be drawn between the

various intentions that underlie the different kinds of terminal sessions. Nor is there any convincing research evidence bearing on the effectiveness of various procedures in relation to various intentions. Nor is there any particularly cogent argument for educational institutions undertaking obligations in these directions beyond the sense of good will toward our foreign guests that is prevalent in this country. Nevertheless, an important aspect is that almost any kind of well-conducted terminal session can be educational in a cognitive and in an emotional sense. Insightful leaders of such conferences should be able to effect a considerable degree of superficial therapy for individuals who may need it. It might also be argued that, since the sojourn abroad is merely an episode in a total learning experience, any educational device that attempts to summarize and take stock is appropriate for both American and overseas participants. It will behoove American educational institutions to follow closely the experimental efforts being made by certain pioneer groups in this direction.

It should be stressed finally that the reactions to the American sojourn expressed during the predeparture period will not necessarily dominate recall of the sojourn once the individual has reached home. Predeparture affect is no more indicative of the total influence of the sojourn experience than is affect during the spectator phase in determining the reactions of a student throughout his stay in the host country.

Conclusions

No attempt will be made to recapitulate the content of this chapter on policies and practices with respect to foreign students on American campuses. Each topic is clearly captioned in the text and is already only a summary of subjects that are frequently discussed at much greater length by interested educational administrators, counselors, and teaching staff. On most topics

the wide range of existing views has been briefly sketched and whenever possible the supporting arguments for one or another view have been marshaled. Frequently the differences in policies and practices are attributable to situational factors peculiar to different institutions.

Several general conclusions emerge from this rapid survey. First, each campus must develop policies and practices with respect to foreign students based not only on its local institutional situation but also on a broad knowledge of foreign student programs and of foreign students as socially and psychologically determined individuals who have varying needs. Every educational institution is not equally prepared to satisfy programmatic goals or individual needs.

Second, each institution has an obligation to make a full and explicit statement of its policies and practices in respect to foreign students. Only in this fashion can the heterogeneous but interlocking interests of American colleges and universities, individual foreign students, and program administrators be best served. The campus study committees under the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace program on Universities and World Affairs have in some instances provided a first step in this direction.

Third, certain needs exist for constructive leadership and for fact-finding that extend beyond individual campuses and might be undertaken by one or another of the associations of professional groups. Among such undertakings can be listed: (1) a revision of the *Handbook for Counselors of Students from Abroad*; (2) development of relations with cultural and educational attachés, both those from abroad and those serving the United States in foreign countries; (3) studies of most advantageous housing facilities for foreign students; (4) centralized, current, and accurate information on accreditation; (5) certificates for students who have not completed work for a degree; (6) a guide to the capacity of different types of institutions to

absorb foreign students; (7) a review of experience to date on affiliation between American and foreign institutions with suggestions for the best practices in such relationships; and (8) study of predeparture briefing of various types.

Although suggestions of this specific nature are made only in the context of the final chapter of this volume, any review of the relationship of foreign students and higher education in the United States must reveal the need for continuity of experience, for new and meaningfully collected data, and for constant reappraisal of practices if we in the United States are to offer students from abroad constructive educational opportunities.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Twenty-Five U. S. Institutions Having the Largest Foreign Student Enrollment in 1951-52

| Institution | Number of Foreign Students | Total Enrollment Resident Students | Percentage Foreign Students to Total Student Enrollment | Rank of Institution in Percentage of Foreign Students |
|---|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1. University of California..... | 1,459 | 34,883 | 4.2 | 8 |
| 2. Columbia University..... | 1,379 | 27,278 | 5.1 | 5 |
| 3. New York University..... | 1,185 | 45,186 | 2.6 | 17 |
| 4. University of Michigan..... | 781 | 17,035 | 4.6 | 7 |
| 5. Harvard University..... | 730 | 10,239 | 7.1 | 3 |
| 6. University of Minnesota..... | 512 | 18,682 | 2.7 | 16 |
| 7. Massachusetts Institute of Technology..... | 493 | 4,874 | 10.1 | 2 |
| 8. University of Washington..... | 449 | 13,297 | 3.4 | 12 |
| 9. University of Wisconsin..... | 423 | 16,142 | 2.6 | 18 |
| 10. University of Illinois..... | 417 | 20,105 | 2.1 | 20 |
| 11. Cornell University..... | 400 | 9,926 | 4.0 | 9 |
| 12. University of Chicago..... | 355 | 7,431 | 4.8 | 6 |
| 13. Monteruma Seminary..... | 355 | 355 | 100.0 | 1 |
| 14. University of Southern California..... | 303 | 10,857 | 2.8 | 14 |
| 15. University of Texas..... | 303 | 12,290 | 2.5 | 19 |
| 16. University of Pennsylvania..... | 295 | 16,299 | 1.8 | 22 |
| 17. Stanford University..... | 271 | 7,584 | 3.6 | 11 |
| 18. George Washington University..... | 259 | 9,541 | 2.7 | 15 |
| 19. Syracuse University..... | 257 | 14,459 | 1.8 | 23 |
| 20. Louisiana State University..... | 256 | 6,608 | 3.9 | 10 |
| 21. Michigan State College..... | 247 | 13,417 | 1.8 | 21 |
| 22. Yale University..... | 217 | 7,270 | 3.4 | 13 |
| 23. Indiana University..... | 231 | 17,578 | 1.3 | 24 |
| 24. Ohio State University..... | 213 | 18,482 | 1.2 | 25 |
| 25. Howard University..... | 212 | 3,697 | 5.7 | 4 |
| Total..... | 12,032 | 39.5 percent of total foreign student enrollment) | | |

Source: Institute of International Education, *Education for One World, 1951-52* (New York: The Institute, 1952), p. 20.

Appendix B

DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN IN 1930-31 AND 1951-52

| Country | 1930-31 | 1951-52 | Country | 1930-31 | 1951-52 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|---------|---------|
| Afghanistan..... | 1 | 79 | Korea..... | 124 | 288 |
| Argentina..... | 33 | 196 | Lebanon..... | ..... | 147 |
| Australia..... | 41 | 177 | Liberia..... | 1 | 99 |
| Austria..... | 66 | 233 | Luxembourg..... | ..... | 8 |
| Belgium..... | 19 | 144 | Malaya..... | 6 | 157 |
| Bolivia..... | 32 | 192 | Mexico..... | 325 | 1,176 |
| Brazil..... | 36 | 471 | Netherlands..... | 63 | 385 |
| British West Indies.. | 159 | 54 | New Zealand..... | 18 | 72 |
| Burma..... | 2 | 90 | Nicaragua..... | 22 | 151 |
| Canada..... | 1,313 | 4,193 | Nigeria..... | ..... | 226 |
| Chile..... | 36 | 161 | Norway..... | 79 | 409 |
| China..... | 1,306 | 2,918 | Pakistan..... | ..... | 187 |
| Colombia..... | 70 | 952 | Panama..... | 111 | 356 |
| Costa Rica..... | 35 | 147 | Paraguay..... | 2 | 32 |
| Cuba..... | 150 | 675 | Peru..... | 47 | 259 |
| Denmark..... | 51 | 128 | Philippine Islands.. | 890 | 880 |
| Dominican Republic. | 5 | 95 | Portugal..... | 6 | 59 |
| Ecuador..... | 14 | 127 | Saudi Arabia..... | 7 | 17 |
| Egypt..... | 35 | 344 | Sierra Leone..... | ..... | 43 |
| El Salvador..... | 8 | 142 | Spain..... | 61 | 142 |
| Ethiopia..... | ..... | 41 | Sweden..... | 69 | 223 |
| Finland..... | 30 | 144 | Switzerland..... | 95 | 189 |
| France..... | 143 | 588 | Syria..... | 52 | 124 |
| Germany..... | 415 | 1,234 | Thailand..... | 27 | 268 |
| Gold Coast..... | ..... | 66 | Turkey..... | 117 | 417 |
| Greece..... | 99 | 651 | Union of So. Africa.. | 72 | 95 |
| Guatemala..... | 15 | 182 | United Kingdom.... | 615 | 1,034 |
| Haiti..... | 10 | 78 | Uruguay..... | 2 | 49 |
| Honduras..... | 24 | 116 | Venezuela..... | 26 | 447 |
| Iceland..... | 3 | 42 | Yugoslavia..... | 20 | 80 |
| India..... | 195 | 1,099 | Stateless..... | ..... | 121 |
| Indonesia..... | 5 | 130 | Undesignated..... | ..... | 553 |
| Iran..... | 41 | 859 | All others..... | 1,018 | 1,924 |
| Iraq..... | 11 | 499 | | | |
| Ireland..... | 86 | 101 | | | |
| Israel..... | ..... | 779 | | | |
| Italy..... | 170 | 386 | | | |
| Japan..... | 987 | 1,133 | | | |
| Jordan and Palestine. | 92 | 179 | | | |
| | | | Total..... | 9,643 | 30,462 |

Source: This material is extracted from Institute of International Education, *Education for One World, 1951-52* (New York: The Institute, 1952), pp. 45-46.

Appendix C

Suggestions Made in 1925 for Assisting Foreign Students in the United States¹

THE FOLLOWING suggestions are a highly condensed summary of chapter 9 in *The Foreign Student in America*.

1. Students should not study in the United States while they are still immature; graduates rather than undergraduates are preferable. This was stressed especially for China, Latin America, and the Near East.
2. Teaching should stress practice rather than theory. This was brought out especially with respect to China.
3. Scholarships should be granted with the understanding that recipients must return home. This was stressed for the Near East.
4. The importance of personal relationships for all students was stressed—friends, "mothers," families, etc., by most discussants.
5. Responsibility for welfare of foreign students was variously placed on individual institutions, churches or other Christian organizations, communities, and on the government of the United States (one discussant).
6. Foreign governments should appoint a representative to care for students of their nationality.
7. Colleges should have foreign student counselors.
8. Organizations of national groups on campuses should be encouraged. This was stressed for Philippine students.
9. The American people should be educated about foreign countries.
10. Returned foreign students should be urged to organize "alumni" in their homelands.

¹ W. R. Wheeler, H. H. King, and A. B. Davidson (eds.). *The Foreign Student in America* (New York: Association Press, 1925).

Appendix D

Views on Capacity of American Educational Institutions to Absorb More Foreign Students¹

IN REPLY to the question:

"Do you believe that our universities have enough room for the absorption of additional foreign students at the graduate and undergraduate levels, under the program as presently conducted?"

Answers were tabulated as follows:

| <i>Reply</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Yes—without comment | 97 | 50 |
| Yes—particularly for small colleges and universities.... | 9 | 5 |
| Yes—with reservations | 65 | 34 |
| No—without comment | 4 | 2 |
| No comment, don't know | 18 | 9 |
| Total | 193 | 100 |

Eighty-nine per cent of the administrators replying to the question felt that at least for the present and immediate future this absorption can be accomplished. Fifty per cent of the respondents offered an unqualified² affirmative answer to the query, while another five per cent thought that small colleges in particular could enroll more exchangees:

¹ Bureau of Social Science Research, American University, *The Student Exchange Program: An Appraisal by 193 Educators and 77 Business and Organization Executives*, prepared for International Evaluation Staff, IIA, Dept. of State, January 1953, pp. 24-26.

² *Author's note:* Without access to the original material, it is not possible to know whether replies meant unqualified approval or simply whether a questionnaire was checked and no comments were inserted.

The larger universities have approximately three per cent of their enrollment in foreign students. Smaller colleges have less than one-half of one per cent. A widespread distribution of foreign students in all universities and colleges would accomplish the purpose of better acquaintance with American life and culture as it is lived not only in large cities but in small towns and rural areas of our land. [Concordia College]

Thirty-four per cent qualified an affirmative reply in some fashion. The largest number of these—thirteen per cent of all respondents—felt that additional funds would be needed for expansion:

I believe that our universities and colleges can absorb many more foreign students at both graduate and undergraduate levels under the present program, provided of course that the financing of educational exchanges does not fall on the already overburdened budgets of the universities. [University of Kansas]

Six per cent of the respondents thought that colleges could continue to admit additional exchange students for a limited time, as did this official of a small liberal arts college:

From information gained, I should say that during the next two years at least the colleges would have room for the absorption of additional foreign students. [Shorter College]

Five per cent of the university administrators responding felt that certain changes in the exchange program, as it is presently run, would have to be initiated before their schools could take on additional foreign students. The two changes suggested here were more careful selection and screening of exchange students as well as a more coordinated approach to the administration of the present exchange program.

We could take more students and would be glad to have them if they came properly screened and qualified. We have discovered that many students inform our consuls abroad that they have sufficient funds to take care of the academic year. This turns out not to be the case. . . . [Ohio University]

The remaining respondents who offered qualified "yes" to the question of whether colleges could absorb additional exchange students either:

- a) pointed out the need for increased personnel and facilities (4 per cent);

- b)* indicated that only limited numbers could be absorbed (4 per cent);
- c)* suggested that such professional institutions as law and medical schools could not handle additional foreign students (2 per cent).

Two per cent of the university officials queried suggested that American institutions of higher learning could not absorb more student exchangees.

One-tenth of the sample did not answer the question.

Appendix E

Analysis of Institute of International Education Staffing for 1930 and 1952¹

In 1930, 20 persons were concerned in the Institute of International Education student program, either directly or in an executive capacity, although there was a total staff of 25 people. At that time, IIE-related students numbered 361, of whom 191 were outbound Americans and 170 were inbound foreign students. This represented about 1.8 percent of the total foreign student population of 9,961 at that date. The student program staff of 20 carried an average per capita load of 18 students.

In 1952 the Institute of International Education had a permanent staff of 110 persons in the United States and foreign student program, 15 executives, secretaries, a greatly enlarged accounting department and a total staff of about 228 persons. In that year, IIE-related students numbered 4,241 of whom 1,087 were outbound Americans and 3,154 were inbound foreign students or specialists. This represented about 13 percent of the total foreign student population of 30,462 at that date. Within IIE, the staff of over 110 persons carried an average per capita load of 30 students.

¹ The writer is indebted to Mrs. Vandi Haygood for the material included here.

Appendix F

Statement on the Language Problem of Foreign Students¹

IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE that was sent out for the collection of data on foreign-student performance, the universities were asked to give information, if available, on the English language difficulties of individual students and the effect upon their work. It developed that very few schools were able to furnish such information. Your Committee then decided that it would be desirable to find out what the practice was among Association members in the matter of testing the English competence of foreign students and offering special instruction for those whose English proved to be deficient. Accordingly, last July, a questionnaire was sent to each member school, and replies were received from 34. Twenty-one of these schools give no English examination to foreign students, either upon or before entrance to the Graduate School. Nine give such examinations to all entering foreign students, and four give them only to students referred by the departments or by advisors as showing deficiency in the language.

The degree of competence in English, as indicated by the examinations, determines whether a student will be required to take special work in English. In eleven schools, English courses for foreign students are offered in the English Department; in four, full-time work is offered in a special program; in six, courses are offered in departments other than English, such as Speech or Linguistics; in five, help is provided through individual aid or tutoring; one school sends students to a nearby college. From these data, it is clear that about one-half of the members of the Association regard

¹ An excerpt from a report in "Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Fifty-fourth Annual Conference of the Association of American Universities and Fifth Annual Conference of the Association of Graduate Schools," Oct. 12, 1953 (Mimeographed).

the English ability of students as a problem requiring attention. North Carolina, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Princeton, however, reported very little trouble in this regard because of care in the selection of students. This fall, for the first time, Harvard has offered a four-week orientation course for foreign students preceding the opening of the school year; special emphasis is put on training in English.

Last year, a preliminary report was made on objective tests of a foreign student's proficiency in the use of English that had been developed by Professor Robert Lado, of the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan. Since that time, considerable experience has been gained from further use of these tests. During the past year, the English language test was used by the Department of State in selecting scholarship candidates from Japan. More than 2,000 candidates were examined, and the field office reported complete satisfaction with the results and is planning to use the test again in Japan next year. In the summer of 1952, this same test had been taken by 100 German students who were brought to this country for an orientation program. It was given to them at the beginning and at the end of the orientation period and the papers were graded in the State Department offices that administered it. The test scores and the subjective evaluation of the students' proficiency by their instructors showed a close correlation. For over a year, a similar objective test developed by Dr. Lado has been given in several binational centers sponsored by the Department of State in Greece and in a number of Latin-American countries. In this case, the papers were sent to the English Language Institute of the University of Michigan for evaluation and for certification of the student's proficiency in English. Although the students were charged a fee of \$5.00 in United States money for the privilege of taking the test, more than 600 took it—an indication of the need and interest felt in foreign countries.

The test can be given at low cost, however, as in the Japanese program where the State Department printed, administered, and scored them. They do not require individual administration, and can be supervised and graded by the clerical staff. Their validity and accuracy seem to be well established. It would be a great step forward if the State Department could arrange to have these or similar tests administered by Cultural Offices and consular officials throughout the world, and so practically eliminate, in their own countries, those

students whose language difficulties will be a serious handicap after they get here. At the present time, these officials depend on statements of student proficiency from teachers, on conversations with the students, or upon a subjective test that requires individual administration and judgment of the student's answers. The results of this sort of testing are highly variable and often unsatisfactory. The most distressing cases of students with language deficiency who have entered our graduate schools have received consular approval of their English competence.

Index

INDEX

- Academic performance, 181-86
 Academic status, 86-88, 182-84
 Acceptance of elements in host society, 79
 Activism. *See* Effort-optimism syndrome
 Adaptive phase of adjustment, 68-69, 129
 characterized by active involvement, 68
 crucial character of, 150
 effect of sojourn cut short, 68-69
 tendency to "regression," 68
 Adjustment, 129, 133
 stages of, 66-73, 76-77
 See also Postreturn adjustment; Re-adjustment; Sojourn adjustment
 Administrative support of foreign students, 188-91
 Admission standards and procedures
 Cieslak study of, 181-82
 conclusions on, 163-64
 desirability of minimum code, 162
 problem of assisting rejected applicants, 182-83
 Advice and counseling, distinction between, 168-69
 Affiliation of higher institutions, advantages and disadvantages of, 192-93, 197
 African students, competence in English, 83
 Age
 and academic status, 129
 appropriate to study abroad, 85-88
 Alienation, 73, 75, 89-90, 115, 129
 role of cultural attaché in preventing, 177
 See also Emigration
 American Council on Education, 132
 American educational institutions
 independent approach to foreign students, 132
 relationship to noneducational institutions, in foreign student field, 133
 American educational system, difficulty of adjusting to, 81
 American-Scandinavian Foundation, 8
 American way of life, 80, 148
 See also Configurations of American life
 "Americanization" of foreign students, 12
 See also Assimilation
 Anchorage, firmness of, 48-52, 101, 128, 143
 defined, 48
 factors affecting, 49
 psychological tensions produced by rapidly changing homeland, 49
 Anomic, 49
 Anti-Americanism, protective, on part of returnees, 76
 Anxiety, in dealing with foreign students, 134
 Asian students
 increase in number of, 4
 need for attention to living arrangements of, 181
 Assimilation, 75, 165-67
 Association of American Universities, 187, 208
 Association of Graduate Schools
 study of grades of foreign students, 185-86
 survey of attention to problem of competence in English, 84-85

- Attitudes, effect of age and remoteness of exchange experience on, 74-75
See also Adjustment; Prearrival attitudes
- Awards, xii
 full versus partial, 158-59
- Beals, Ralph, prediction on Mexican students, 122
- Belgian American Educational Foundation, Inc., 7, 139
- Belgian students, Riegel study of post-return attitudes, 74-75
- Bennett, John, study of Japanese student personality types, 123-25
- Blnational relations, role of cross-cultural study in, 136, 139
- British Council, 23, 139
- Bureau of Social Science Research, study of reactions to orientation, 153
- Capacity to absorb foreign students, 204-6
See also Saturation points
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace program on universities and world affairs, vi-viii, ix-x, xiv, 82, 123, 131, 196
- Census of foreign students, xi
- Certificates, 186-87
- Chinese Communist schools, number of foreign students in, 29
- Chinese students, effect of social changes on life expectations, 52
- Cieslak, Edward C., study of admissions standards and procedures, 181-82
- Citizen participation, American contrasted with Indian, 58
See also Effort-optimism syndrome; Sociocentrism
- Citizenship as goal of state universities, extended to foreign students, 166, 167-68
- Class status, 129
See also Social status
- Cole, Margaret Van B., bibliography on exchange of persons, xii-xiii
- Colonial, or recently colonial, students, 43-44, 47, 118-19
- "Coming to terms"
 with home country
 acceptance of role as deviant or variant, 73, 74
 alienation, 73, 75, 129
 assumption of permanent ambivalances and re-evaluations, 73, 74-75
 return to national norms, 73, 74, 129
 with host country
 characterized by marked positive or negative attitudes, 69-72
 Kiell study of Indian students, 69-70
 need of insecure student for favorable experiences, 71
 positive affect of student experiencing constructive sojourn, 71-72
 reactions of student having threatening sojourn experiences, 72
 Zajonc study of Indian students, 70-71
- Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, xi, xiv
- Community relationships for foreign students, 172-73
- "Concern" for foreign student, 29
 European and American, compared, 31
 Japanese students' experience with, 32-33
- Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, 141
- Configurations of American life, 55-65, 129
 contribution of orientation and counseling in making clear, 65, 105-9
 effort-optimism syndrome, 57-58, 61-62
 egalitarianism, 60-62
 "friendliness," 62-63
 generosity, 64

- sociocentrism, 58-59
- "Conformer" type of student, 123-24
- Conformity, 16-17, 70-72
- Cornell University, Southeast Asia program, 103
- Counseling, 99, 108-9, 167-78
 - academic, 169-70
 - personal, 170-71
- Courtesy of foreign students as factor in their evaluations, 14, 154, 180
- Crawford, W. Rex, bibliography on exchange of persons, xii-xiii
- Credentials, foreign
 - evaluation of, 182
 - need for central service, 184, 196
- Credits and degrees, problem of validation, 104
- Cross-cultural education, xiv, 11
 - need for continuity and experience in, 137
- "Cultural ambassadors," 44-45
- Cultural and educational attachés, role in aiding students, 176-78, 196
- Cultural distance, xiii, 52-53, 99
- Cultural imperialism, 167
- Cultural relations, foreign student advisers need for understanding of, 175
- Culture contrast, limitations of concept, 78
- Curiosity, as foreign student motive, 14
- "Dating," American pattern of
 - baffling to foreign students, 181
 - examples of effect of, on Mexican and Scandinavian students, 94
- Denationalization. *See* Alienation
- Department of State, xiv, 131-32
 - demands on educational institutions, 191
 - evaluation of exchange program, xiii
 - experiments with grantee orientation, 152-53
 - inbound foreign student program, 20-27
 - questionnaire on predeparture preparation, 145-47
 - study of grades of affiliated students, 184-85
 - study of grantees' reactions to living arrangements, 179-80
- Deviant, acceptance of role as, 73
- Diplomatic List*, 178
- Diplomatic relationships
 - effect of, on life chances of returnees, 105-6, 108
 - Passin study of Japanese, 106
 - See also* International relations
- Discrimination, 45-48
 - expectations, moral judgments, and experience, 47-48
 - racial, 46-47
- Distribution of foreign students
 - by country of origin, 4, 202
 - problem of geographical, 159-60
- Dormitories and rooming houses, 178
- Duration of sojourn, 83-89, 161, 120
 - effect of, cut short, 68-69
 - effect of regulations on, 69
 - influence of, 88
 - study of Japanese students, 83-89
 - study of Norwegian students, 89
- Education for One World*, xi
- Education, primary goal of study abroad, 17, 133
- Effort-optimism syndrome in American culture, 57-58, 61-62
 - and citizen participation, 58
 - and material wealth, 61-62
 - and work as a virtue, 57, 62
 - educational aspect of, 59-60
 - interpretations of, on American pre-occupation with activity, 59
- Egalitarianism, 60-62, 115
 - and American friendship patterns, 62-64
 - example of misinterpretation of, 61
 - readjustment hazards of, for foreign student, 61
 - See also* Interpersonal relations, Status
- Emigration, as hope of foreign students, 15, 49, 116
 - example of German students, 100

Emigration—Continued

on part of Belgian students, 75

English language

Association of Graduate Schools
statement on language problems
of foreign students, 84-85, 208-
10

competence in

as foreign student goal, 15, 84

as function of length of intended
sojourn, 143-44

difficulties with

and self-esteem, 43

Institute of International Educa-
tion, findings of, 81-82

effects of low command of, 82-83

minimum test of, 85

Enrollment, foreign student, 3-4, 201

European and American policies
compared, 31

Escapism, 16, 65

example of German and Austrian
students, 100

"Exchange program," limitations of
term, xiii-xiv

Experiment in International Living,
orientation in American homes,
152-53

Federal Government exchange pro-
grams

administrative and operational dupli-
cation and complexity of, 25-26
and national interest, 24

confusion about agencies involved
in, 20-21

experimentation and evaluation fa-
cilitated, 26

funds matched from private re-
sources, 26-27

responsiveness of, to guidance of
private agencies, 27

risk of being interpreted as subvert-
ing education to propaganda,
23

role of, disproportionate to fiscal out-
lay, 27

viewed as inflexible and short range,
24-25

Federal Government, philosophic views
on role of, 19-20

Financial outlay for and by foreign
students, 21-23

Ford Foundation, xii

Foreign Operations Administration, xii

Foreign policy, influence of, on inter-
personal relations, 18-19

Foreign Student in America, The, 8,
203

Foreign student, *The*, misleading char-
acter of term, xiv, 35-36

Foreign student advisers

as go-between student and cultural
attaché, 176

qualifications of, 174-76

varying functions of, 171-74

Freedom for expression, 11

Freedom of choice, 90-91, 129, 149,
161

Friendship, patterns of

American, bewildering to foreign
students, 62

compensatory friendships on part of
American students, 65

cultural comparisons of, 62-63

effect of American, on foreign stu-
dents, 63

Frustration, on part of foreign students
expressed in aggressiveness, 71, 72

expressed in withdrawal and depres-
sion, 72

Frustrations and hostilities of cross-
cultural contacts, 65

Fulbright programs

criticisms of, 138, 144, 162

recruitment of outbound research
and teaching personnel, 141

teacher exchange, xiii

travel grants, 22, 24, 27, 182

Fulbright, Senator, reply to queries on
university cooperation in foreign
student programs, 163

Generosity, contrast between American
and Indian patterns of, 64

- German students
 study of interpersonal relations of, 152-53
 study of orientation of, 152-53
 Germanic Academic Exchange Service, 7
 Goals and motives of student exchanges, 11-17, 137
 and freedom for expression, 11
 as revealed in literature of 1925 and 1954, 8-9
 education, primary goal, 17
 need for diverse sources of funds to meet variety of, 19
 viewpoints of governments, educational world, American public, and students, 12-16
 Grades, 183-86
 Grants. See Awards

Handbook for Counselors of Students from Abroad
 criticism of certain qualifications summarized in, 174-76
 need for revision of, 168, 196
 Housing. See Living arrangements

 Image of host country, factors affecting, 107-8
 Increase in foreign student population, 3-4, 202
 long-range factors in, 6-8
 short-range factors in, 4-6
 Indian students
 American affronts to national sensitivity of, 42
 competence in English language, 63
 reluctance to compete for awards, 142
 studying in United Kingdom, 30
 Zajonc study of attitudes of, 70-71
 Individual versus individualism, 50, 147, 167
 Individualism, American, compared with French, 59
 Information
 about applicants for placement, 158
 inadequacy of, for applicants, 157
 Institute of International Education, v, vii, xiv, 7, 132, 137, 174
 analysis of staffing of, 207
 census of foreign students, xi
 central index of foreign students, xii
 demands made by, on educational institutions, 191
 main contracting agency for Department of State inbound students, 20, 21
 placement counseling, 154-57
 selection committees, 139
 survey of Department of State grantees, 80-82
 "Intellectual" type of student, 124
 Intercultural exchange programs
 investigation of, xi-xiii
 number of nations carrying on, 29-29
 International agencies sponsoring educational exchange, 29-30
 International character of universities
 European, 165
 older American, 165-66
 International Educational Exchange Service. See Department of State
 International houses, xiv, 178-79
 International relations, 53-54
 International Relations Clubs study tour, 126
 International responsibility of United States and concern with foreign students, 7, 28
 Interpersonal relations, 61, 93-95, 99, 129, 170-71
 and adjustment to foreign culture, 93
 crucial element in adjustment of foreign students, 92, 93-93
 "dating," 94
 effect of foreign policy on, 18-19
 effect on self-esteem, 41
 friendship patterns contrasted, 62-63, 91
 Involvement. See Self-esteem, national status, and involvement

- Japanese students
 desirable duration of sojourn, 88-89
 propitious time to study in United States, 87-88
- Kiell, Norman, study on attitudes of Indian students, 69-70
- King and I, The*, as image of Thailand, 42
- Kluckhohn, Clyde and Florence, concept of effort-optimism syndrome, 57
- Knowledge of own country, importance of, 147-49
 evidence from India and Japan, 148
 experience of International Farm Youth Exchange, 147
 implications of, for counselors, 149-49
- Taba study, 147-48
- Knowledge of United States, 92-93, 128
- Lambert, Richard D., study of Indian students, 42
- Language facility. *See* English language
- Latin-American students
 increase in, 4
 need for attention to living arrangements of, 181
- Life chances, 15, 143
 redefining on return home, 73
- Life chances and Life expectations defined, 49-50
 effect of changes in homeland on, 51-52, 108
 effect of, on study in foreign country, 50
 postreturn adjustment to, 108
 relationship of, to social class, 51
 role of national technical development to, 50-51
- Life expectations and Life chances
 effect of national stability or change on, 102
 experience of returned German leaders, 102
- study of Syrian situation, 103
- Lippitt, Ronald, study of returned German leaders, 102
- Living arrangements, 178-81, 196
 dormitories and rooming houses, 178
 International Houses, 178-79
 living with an American family, 179-80
- Load, foreign student, European compared with American, 29-31, 189-90
- Managerial techniques, 134-35
- Marriage, as objective of foreign study, 16
- Married students, arguments for and against wives accompanying husbands abroad, 182
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 30
- Materialistic interpretation of American life, 61
- Meet the U.S.A.*, 147
- Motives and expectations of foreign students, 14-16
- "Name" institutions, preference for, 157
- National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, xiv, 132
- National diagnoses, 121-23
- National 4-H Clubs, International Farm Youth Program, xiii
- National interest and government exchange programs, 24, 28-29
- National norms, return to, 73, 76
- National policy and people, distinction between, 117
- National status and self-esteem, 41-49
 as a continuum, 41
 as a series of typologies, 41-42
 "felt" and "accorded," 42, 99
 identifying self-esteem with national status, 43-44
 predictability of, 45
 See also Self-esteem, national status, and involvement

- Nationalism of new countries, and life
 · chances of returnees, 105-6
- Near and Middle Eastern students
 increase in, 4
 need for attention to living arrange-
 ments of, 181
- Norwegian students, influence of dura-
 tion of sojourn, 89
- Office of Education
 interest in foreign student program,
 131-32
 list of government grantees, xii
 selection of students, 141
- Orientation, 149-54
 need for experience and research on,
 154
 need for flexibility, 149-50
 on campus or in homes, 152-54
 value of regional centers, 150-52
- Passin, Herbert, study on returned Jap-
 anese students, 87, 108
- Personality and culture, foreign stu-
 dent advisers' need for under-
 standing of, 175
- Personality types, 123-25
 Bennett's typology of Japanese stu-
 dents, 123-25
 limitations of formulation of, 123
- Perspective on study abroad, xi
- Placement, 154-63
 difficulties of, 157-60
 hampering effect of delays on, 160
 number of students receiving coun-
 seling in, 154-55
 satisfaction with, 155-57
- Placement bureaus, possible services of
 centralized, 160-61
- Planning and continuity in cross-cul-
 tural programs, 136-49
- Point in educational career, 87-88,
 128, 143
- Postreturn adjustment, 100-9, 129
 affect toward host country, 106-8
 difficulties in readjustment to home
 country, 100-3
- implications of, for American pro-
 gram planners, 108-9
 life expectations and life chances,
 102-3
 recognition of educational experi-
 ence, 103-6, 108
See also Readjustment
- Postreturn affect toward host country,
 107-9
 and life chances and expectations,
 108
 shifting images of host country, 107-
 8
- Practical living problems, 80, 148
- Preadvival attitudes, factors in
 cultural distance, 52-53
 firmness of anchorage, 48-52
 international relations, 53-54
 relationship between national status
 and self-esteem, 41-47
 self-esteem, 89-91
- Preadvival preparation, 144-49
- Predeparture, 73, 129
 briefing, 193-95, 197
- Prestige accorded educational systems,
 103-4, 106
 comparisons of Japanese, Indian,
 Swedish, and Mexican, 103-4
- Private foundations, role in interna-
 tional educational exchange, 7-8
- Pro-Americanism, 105-6
- "Problem of the foreign student," 1,
 28, 32
- "Program," xiv
- Program counseling. *See* Counseling
- Propaganda, 12, 23
- Proprietary schools, deliberate recruit-
 ment of foreign students, 190-91
- Qualitative improvement, task ahead, 7
- Quantification, need for conceptual
 clarity, 37
- Quota for foreign students, 191
- Readjustment
 relative importance of factors in, 107
 stages of, 73-79

Readjustment—Continued

- adapting and redefining personal relations and life chances, 73
- "coming to terms" with home country, 73
- greetings and comparisons, 73
- See also Postreturn adjustment
- Recognition of returnee's educational experience, 103-8, 108
 - credits and degrees, 104
 - diplomatic relationships, 105
 - effect of, on life chances, 103
 - prestige accorded foreign educational systems, 103
 - relevance of educational experience for returnee, 104-5
- Recruitment, 141, 190-91
- Reference groups, 95-98, 101, 129
- Regional orientation centers, 150-52
- Regulations, 89, 91, 99, 134, 144, 175
- Relationship of American colleges and universities to foreign students, varied approaches to, 131-33
- Relevance of American educational experience for returnee, 104-5, 143
- study of Indian students, 105
- Reorientation, 193-95
- Resistance to elements in host country, 79
- Riegel, O. W., study of Belgian returnees, 74-75
- Rockefeller Foundation, 139
 - medical training program in India, 141
- Saturation points, 168-91, 196
- Scandinavian-American Foundation, 139
- Sectarian schools, emphasis on assimilation, 167-68
- Selection, 139-44
 - competition versus invitation, 142, 144
 - direct responsibility of American educational institutions in, 140-41
 - in view of postreturn opportunities, 143
- Institute of International Education committees, 139-40
- Self-esteem, 39-41, 90-91, 99, 129, 142, 149
 - factors affecting, 40-41, 90-91, 99
 - real and projected difficulties, 47-48
 - See also "Cultural ambassadors"; Discrimination; National status and self-esteem; Self-esteem, national status, and involvement
- Self-esteem, national status, and involvement, 114-21, 128
 - types emerging from relationship of, 115-21
- Skills as objective of foreign student, 12, 15
- Social and administrative implications of foreign student program, 133
- Social changes, 52
 - effect of, on life chances, 108
 - role of variant in, 75
- Social distance, interpreted as discrimination, 47
- "Social engineers," 134-35
- Social Science Research Council, xiii, xiv
 - Committee on Cross-Cultural Education, xiv-xv, 44
- Social status, 98-98, 128
- Sociocentrism in American life and distinction between praising the individual and individualism, 59
 - as seen by foreign students, 58-59
 - effect of, on counseling of foreign students, 109
- Sojourn adjustment, factors in
 - accorded national status, 99
 - age and academic status, 85-88
 - alienation, 89-90
 - duration, 68-69, 88-89
 - freedom of choice, 90, 99
 - Institute of International Education survey of, 80-82
 - interpersonal relations, 93-95, 99
 - knowledge of United States, 92-93
 - language facility, 81-85, 99
 - reference groups, 95-98

- status and self-esteem, 96-98
- summary, 99
- "Special students," 183
- Spectator phase of adjustment, 67-68, 129
- "Spoon-feeding," 31, 168
- Status, American distrust of hierarchically structured, 60
- Status and self-esteem in sojourn adjustment, 96-98
 - class differences, 97
 - experience of female students, 98
 - favorable and unfavorable perception of host country, 98
 - role of supportive interpersonal relations, 98
 - standards of living, 97-98
- Study Abroad*, xii, 29
- Suggestions for assisting foreign students, 9, 203
- "Survey of the Exchange of Persons: The Present Situation," xii-xiii
- Swedish students, propitious time to study in United States, 87
- Switzerland, foreign students in, 30
- Syria, survey of foreign study in relation to manpower needs, 103
- Taba, Hilda, study on cultural attitudes and international understanding, 126-28, 147-48
- Technical Cooperation Mission, 144
- Temporary visitors, 189
- Terminal sessions, 194-95
- Tocqueville, de, Alexis, observations on American life, 56, 60
- Travel as foreign student objective, 145
- Types of learning, Taba study of, 126-28
- Typologies
 - national diagnoses, 121-23
 - personality types, 123-25
 - types emerging from relationship between self-esteem, national status, and involvement, 114-21
 - types emerging from relationship between wants, expectations, and situations, 111-14, 128
 - types of learning, 125-28
- UNESCO, xii, 29
- United Kingdom, Commonwealth and foreign students in, 30
- United States Advisory Commission on Higher Education, 159
- United States Office of Education's Division of International Education. *See* Office of Education
- Universities and World Affairs*, vi, vii
- University of Amsterdam, 30
- University of Geneva, foreign students in, 30
- University of London, foreign students in, 30
- University of Michigan, study of German students at, 94-95
- University of Paris, colonial and foreign students in, 30
- University of Pennsylvania, study of Indian students at, 42-43
- Variant, 73, 75
- Wants, expectations, and situations, 111-14, 128
 - types and expected responses
 - defeated, 113
 - negative, 113
 - neutral or objective, 112
 - positive, 111-12
- Watson, Jeanne
 - study of effect of interpersonal relations on German students, 94-95
 - study of returned German leaders, 102
- William and Mary College, experiment in reorientation to homeland, 194
- Women, status of, and postreturn adjustment, 93, 101
- Work. *See* Effort-optimism syndrome
- Zajonc, Robert B., study of attitudes of Indian students, 70-71

becomes one of trying to find valid orders of generalization in this complex field. It is certainly not the kind of field that opens easily to strict or rigorous scientific inquiry, but is an area given by practical considerations. The pure researcher who undertakes studies on foreign students finds himself forced to draw upon the full stock of concepts and methods he has at his command. The very nature of the area of inquiry suggests that cross-disciplinary research will be entailed if adequate formulations are to be evolved.¹

In what follows an attempt is made to isolate salient factors that seem operative in foreign students' predeparture outlooks, their adaptations to American life, and their readjustments to the homeland. We shall, therefore, be concerned with certain generalizations and conjectures concerning the adaptive processes of individuals who move across boundaries not only of national states but also of languages and cultures.

At this stage value judgments are not to be attached to words like "adjustment" or "adaptation." Nor is "assimilation" implied. Rather, primary concern centers on the psychological adequacy of foreign students in dealing with unfamiliar situations. Concern for what happens, rather than its "goodness" or "badness," must constitute the initial approach in objective inquiries. If one is concerned with understanding these processes, then definitions of such terms as "adjustment," "adaptation," and "readjustment" will be end-products and not a point of departure in any investigation of the human aspects of cross-cultural education. It is nevertheless useful to employ such imprecise words as prerequisites to further thinking in the area.

Lastly, a brief comment on method: In the American scene,

¹ The material in this portion of the book derives almost wholly from the joint thinking of participants in the first phase of research carried out under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Cross-Cultural Education in 1952-53. General statements on the subject and the names of the participants are to be found in Social Science Research Council, *Items*, Vol. 6, No. 1, and Vol. 7, No. 3.

considerable confidence is placed on quantitative statements derived from questionnaires or comparable instruments. No such rigor of method underlies most of what follows here. To the writer, quantification and the associated use of instruments appear appropriate only after some conceptual clarity has been introduced into a field, after some sense exists of the kind and relative significance of the variables that are operative. So far quantitative studies have been used largely to evaluate operations. For example, questionnaires have sought information on student reactions to orientation courses. While these are useful exercises, they do not measurably advance an understanding of the processes involved. A great deal of methodologically rigorous research may be expended on relatively trivial or obvious questions and issues unless it is pursued within the framework of broad and explicit conceptual formulations.